Now, it's FMD on top of mad cow disease

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

THURSDAY, MARCH 1, 2001 ★★ 44 PAGES 3 SECTIONS VOL.16 NO. 83 ₱15

Erap to supporters: I won't ever leave you

BY MARTIN P. MARFIL

ZAMBOANGA City—Deposed President Estrada Tuesday night vowed not to leave the country despite threats of imprisonment by the new administration.

"Kailanman hindi ko kayo iiwan. Kahit na ikulong ako, di ako aalis sa Pilipinas. Ako ay handang makulong, huwag nila akong takutin

ERAP/ A4

'Marines released video to irk Biazon'

BY CARLITO PABLO AND CHRISTINE AVENDAÑO

REAR Adm. Guillermo Wong yesterday assailed the Marine Corps for making public the videotape and transcript of his controversial Feb. 15 speech wherein he implicated Sen. Rodolfo Biazon in a questionable transaction.

In an interview with radio station dzMM, Wong said the Marines wanted to anger Biazon, a former Marine commandant and chief of staff of the Armed Forces, "so they'll have an ally against me."

The Marines "will really use anything for their cause," said Wong, who had publicly sought reforms in the corps' procurement system.

At a press conference yesterday, Biazon raised the possibility that certain quarters were trying to divert public attention from the Marine Corps' alleged purchase of substandard helmets and assault rifles.

He said Wong apologized to him yesterday for linking him to an alleged irregular transaction involving the purchase of night-vision goggles and communication equipment.

Actually, Biazon said, Wong

WONG/ A14

Admiral Wong ships out today.

BY CARLITO PABLO

"I AM one of those who fell. There will be others to rise."

Words of farewell from Rear Adm. Guillermo Wong. But then he did not really fall. More like being thrown overboard from a ship he sought to clean up.

Wong was forced to resign effective today as flag officer in command of the Navy, exactly 15 days after his highly public row over the reforms he wanted to introduce in the Marine Corps, a unit under the Philippine Navy.

Reforms are welcome, the Marines conceded. But they took issue with Wong's "management style." But that's the way he had always been, and he made it to the top of his profession.

Even as a young officer, those who know him say that Wong had already built an image of being frank, saying what's on his mind with an acidic tongue.

Others claimed he had always been a whiner who regarded most systems in the military as imperfect. But they admitted that Wong is as straight as straight can get.

Wong is proud of it: "I'm a ramrod."

According to his mistah from the Philippine Military Academy,

ADMIRAL/ A15

Pols' relatives lead House races in Metro

Surprise bets: Rod Reyes, Mina Gabor, Mark Jimenez

"A FEW Good Men" behind and by the side of President Macapagal on Jan. 19 at Edsa: Rear Admiral Wong, Lt. Gen. Diomedio Villanueva, Maj. Gen. Jaime de los Santos and Chief of Staff Gen. Angelo Reyes. EDWIN BACASMAS

BY GERALD G. LACUARTA, CATHY C. YAMSUAN AND ARMAND N. NOCUM

WITH the deadline yesterday for the filing of candidacies for the May 14 elections, it's now a free-for-all in the political landscape.

Scions of the Oretas, Lims, Golezes, Biazons, etc.; wives or siblings of incumbents; former elected officials; a father-and-son tandem; media personalities; even a fugitive from US justice—all are running in the elections.

And surprise: Rodolfo Reyes, a former press secretary of ousted President Joseph Estrada and ex-top man of Manila's Economic and Cultural Office in Taipei, is contesting the House seat in Parañaque City as an independent.

Ex-Tourism Secretary Mina Gabor also threw her hat into the ring, running for the lone House seat in Pasay City as candidate of the Aksyon Demokratiko ng Pilipinas and Reforma LM.

The candidates are hopeful, those deemed nuisances are downright disgusted.

But if businessman Mark Jimenez, Estrada's former adviser on Latin American affairs, thinks that winning a seat in the House will prevent him from being extradited to the United States, he's wrong.

Justice Secretary Hernando Perez said Jimenez's victory in the May elections would not make the government renege on its extradition treaty with the United States.

Jimenez is wanted in that country for illegal campaign contributions to the Democratic Party during the 1996 blitz of reelectionist Bill Clinton.

Senatorial aspirants who did not make it to the list of 34 candidates drawn up by the Commission on Elections from 67 who filed their

POLS' RELATIVES/ A14

'The Group' to take over chaotic PPC campaign

BY JULIET L. JAVELLANA

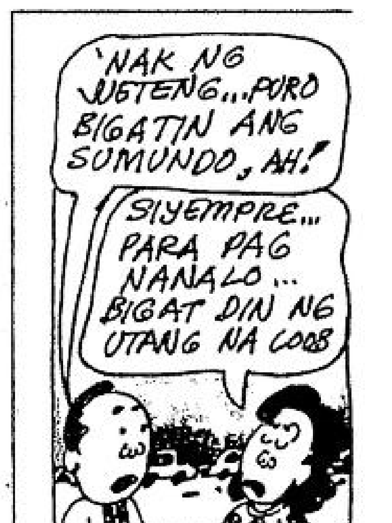
THE STATE of the union is not strong, and a takeover by "The Group" is in the offing to purportedly iron out the kinks, say several insiders of the Macapagal administration's People Power Coalition (PPC).

A coalition official said PPC members identified with the civil society movement and the Church want to take over the coalition's campaign from the dominant Lakas-NUCD, the party of President Macapagal-Arroyo and Vice President Teofisto Guingona.

"There is a power struggle in the PPC. (Some of the candidates) want to put up a separate image from Lakas because they already have their sights on 2004 (presidential elections)," the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, told the INQUIRER.

The official said Lakas, which has the best machinery and organization among the coalition's five political parties, was handling the campaign on a "transitional" basis

THE GROUP/ A14



'NAK NG JUETENG... PURO BIGATIN ANG SUMUNOD, AH!
SIYEMPRE... PARA PAG NANALO... BIGAT DIN NG UTANG NA LOOB

Rich Chinoys rally round Masa's Ping

BY JOWEL F. CANUDAY AND JULIE ALIPALA-INOT
PDI Mindanao Bureau

DAVAO CITY—This "Puwersa ng Masa" candidate is traveling in style.

Ford Expeditions, a Chevrolet Suburban, a Lincoln Navigator, a Toyota Land Cruiser, a Mitsubishi Pajero and a Cherokee jeep

RICH/ A14

Stockbrokers: Peso hinges on Supreme Court ruling

BY DORIS C. DUMLAO AND ARMAND NOCUM

A SUPREME Court ruling favorable to ousted President Joseph Estrada would induce foreign investors to dump Philippine shares and pull down the peso against the US dollar past the 50:$1 level, stockbrokers yesterday said.

Justice Secretary Hernando Perez also said that Estrada's legal efforts to reclaim the presidency were scaring away foreign investors.

"Potential investors, especially foreign investors, are asking questions about the status of the government," Perez said in a radio interview.

He said it was best that the Supreme Court rule on this question soon.

"The sooner we resolve it, the better it will be for the nation because the whole world is keeping its eye on us," he said.

The brokers said any indication that Estrada would gain immunity from suit would weigh down on the stock market and push the 33-share composite index (Phisix) past the 1,600 support level.

Investors have been staying away from the market as they await a Supreme Court decision on Estrada's petition whether he is still the President.

STOCKBROKERS/ A4

THE A-TEAM JOAN BONDOC

When President Macapagal and Jaime Zobel de Ayala get together, something wonderful gets done like the signing of a grant for out-of-school youth projects of the Children and Youth Foundation.

LOPEZ PATRIARCH HONORED

The INQUIRER fetes the Management Man of the Year 2000 awardee, Oscar Lopez, "for his responsible stewardship" that has brought the Lopez group of companies with net worth of P14 billion, "to excellence as characterized by stronger professional management, solid family unity, continued creditworthiness and reputation for integrity." VAL HANDUMON

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New woe: FMD on top of mad cow

THE AGRICULTURE department has banned the import of products made from British beef, pigs, sheep, goats and other animals to protect the Philippines from foot-and-mouth disease, officials said yesterday.

Agriculture Secretary Leonardo Montemayor said the order also empowers customs officers to seize all shipments of foreign livestock and byproducts that they suspect came from Britain.

Montemayor urged Filipinos to eat domestic livestock, saying the meat was free of the disease that has sparked panic in the British countryside.

The Manila city government yesterday assured consumers that meat, particularly beef, that are produced and traded in the capital, especially those coming from the Vitas Slaughterhouse in Tondo, was safe to eat.

Dr. Jose L. Diaz, city veterinarian and chair of the Veterinary Inspection Board, gave the assurance amid concerns over the dreaded "mad cow disease" plaguing European cattle.

In a statement, Diaz said only Australian and local cattle meat are free from the disease, and these are the only ones being slaughtered at the Vitas abattoir.

Government workers yesterday criticized the trade liberalization policy for the mad cow scare gripping the country. The National Federation of Employees Associations in the Department of Agriculture said over-importation and deregulation has led to the proliferation of imported goods, even those unfit for consumption.

"This is clearly greed for profit by the big businesses, (they don't care) even if their goods are poisoning the people as long as they make a profit," Roman Sanchez, Nafeda vice president, said in a statement.

Cases of foot-and-mouth disease in Britain climbed to 18 since the weekend, and veterinary officials said more are expected in the coming days.

Foot-and-mouth disease, which afflicts cloven-hoofed animals, is extremely easy to spread. Although humans almost never catch the disease, they can carry it on boots and clothing. The virus can also be airborne, transmitted from one animal to another, or contracted through contaminated feed.

A ban on European beef imports was already in force, and authorities said Tuesday they would continue the prohibition for fear of mad cow disease.

Efren Nuestro, executive director of the National Meat Inspection Commission, said he inspected one container of imported meat from Ireland that reached the Visayas last month and ordered importers to send it back.

He said eight other containers of European beef that arrived last month would also be shipped back.

Mad cow disease is believed to cause a brain-wasting illness in humans, known as variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease. The human form has killed some 80 Europeans since the mid-1990s, mostly in Britain.

Monterey Foods Corp. yesterday insisted that it did not violate the DA order banning beef products from Europe.

Monterey president Arthur O. Juan said in a statement that from the time the ban against importing beef products from Europe came into effect, Monterey had stopped sourcing beef from there.

"We reiterate that more than 95 percent of our beef comes from live cattle imported from Australia. The balance are imports of frozen beef from a variety of sources, including Australia and South America," he added.

Juan also clarified that Monterey's three shipments of beef from Ireland, which is being held by customs authorities in Cebu, were all ordered prior to the issuance of the ban.

Diaz ordered all VIB veterinarians, meat inspectors and the VIB special squad to strictly monitor and confiscate beef coming from abroad without proper veterinary quarantine certificates.

The Vitas slaughterhouse is the biggest supplier of beef in the country. Its operations were recently privatized by City Hall and leased to the Dealco Farms, the country's biggest beef company.

The VIB and Dealco will be sponsoring a special lecture at the VIB conference hall on March 8 on "mad cow disease," or bovine spongiform encephalopathy, known as Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease in humans. The speaker will be a Japanese "mad cow disease" expert, Dr. Shingo Inoue.

AP with a report from Jerome Aning

PCGG not ready to go after Estrada wealth

By Blanche S. Rivera

THE PRESIDENTIAL Commission on Good Government yesterday admitted it was not ready to take on the task of running after the ill-gotten wealth of ousted President Joseph Estrada and his extended family because it has its hands full with the Marcos plunder cases.

The Macapagal-Arroyo administration was considering tapping the PCGG to help in recovering Estrada's allegedly plundered wealth.

On the PCGG's 15th anniversary yesterday, acting PCGG chair Jorge Sarmiento said it would be "difficult" for the agency to take on the added task considering that a new chair has yet to be appointed.

"We're not even finished with the Marcoses yet," Sarmiento said. "The PCGG's mandate is to go after the Marcos wealth."

He added that the Department of Justice and the Ombudsman were already doing a good job of prosecuting Estrada.

In a related development, the government said it would be reviewing "all the records of all the cases" it has filed against the Marcoses and their cronies to see how far it has to go.

Solicitor General Simeon Marcelo yesterday said his office and the PCGG would create a joint task force for this purpose.

Marcelo said he was also considering getting the services of private lawyers to handle at least 35 cases against the Marcos heirs and cronies.

SEC: Probe of BW scam not suspended

SECURITIES and Exchange Commission chair Lilia Bautista yesterday denied that the justice department had suspended its probe into the BW Resources Corp. scandal that nearly led to the collapse of the stock market in 1999.

Bautista said that Justice Undersecretary Claudio Teehankee Jr. had told her that Department of Justice prosecutor Nilo Mariano denied saying that the DOJ probe had been suspended.

Press reports on Tuesday quoted Mariano as saying that the DOJ probe into BW Resources had been suspended because of defects in the complaint affidavit filed by the SEC last Friday.

Bautista noted that the justice department has not even gone through the whole report yet. *Elena R. Torrijos*

MAMAMAYAN MUNA

HINDI MAMAYA NA!

Lakas denies Lambino claim

LAKAS-NUCD Executive Director Joey Rufino yesterday belied charges raised by disgruntled party official Raul Lambino, who claimed that certain party leaders had disapproved his bid to be the party's congressional candidate in the 5th district of Pangasinan in favor of a rival whom he described as a "hostile element."

Saying that Lambino was harboring his own political agenda, Rufino denied Lambino's accusations that the selection of Marcos "Mark" Cojuangco as Lakas-NUCD candidate in the congressional district had anything to do with "money politics."

He also shrugged off charges that only top party leaders were responsible in coming up with the decision. He said it was the arbitration and selection committees that upheld the local and provincial decision to bring Cojuangco into Lakas.

Rufino said Mark Cojuangco was sworn into the Lakas Party in the presence of former Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr.

"What we have in the Lambino case is a former party official with an obsession to grab a congressional seat even at his own party's expense. He now wants to squeeze the issue to the last drop so may fulfill his own political agenda no matter who gets hurt and whom he betrays," Rufino said.

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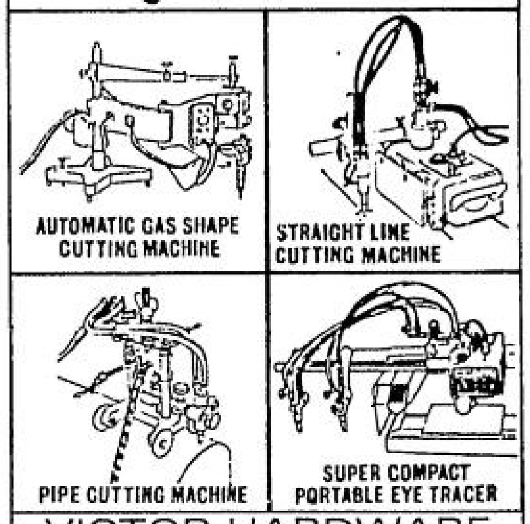
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Defensor opts to stay in Macapagal Cabinet

BY ROCKY NAZARENO

"FOR COUNTRY and Presiden

For these reasons, Housing Secretary Mike T. Defensor said, he is staying in the Cabinet of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

"I thank the President for her understanding. I'm staying for the President," Defensor told the INQUIRER yesterday.

Defensor said he reached his decision to remain as chair of the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council in the Cabinet after "consultations with family and friends."

The 31-year-old erstwhile congressman from Quezon City said Ms Macapagal's performance in the first month of her presidency inspired him (to remain) because she has shown "dedication and diligence" and she "deserves all the support, all the assistance" (she can get).

Defensor secluded himself all day Tuesday, keeping the public guessing on whether he would keep his post or resign to run for a third term in Quezon City's third congressional district.

Monday night he met to discuss his dilemma with his fellow "Spice Boys" and other members of Congress who had vigorously opposed the Estrada administration—Valenzuela Rep. Magtanggol Gunigundo and Caloocan City Rep. Enrico Echiverri.

"Whatever he decides, we will be behind him more than 100 percent," said Malabon-Navotas Rep. Federico Sandoval, after the meeting.

"We're here to show Mike our support. If he returns to Congress, we will all be there with outstretched arms to welcome him," Echiverri said.

With his decision to remain at the helm of HUDCC, Defensor's sister, Maite, will run for congress in QC's third district. She will be up against former senator Nikki Coseteng and former QC councilor Mike Planas.

Defensor had threatened to resign his new post after several key appointments at HUDCC were reportedly made by Malacañang without his knowledge.

One of the appointments—that of Zorayda Alonso as president and chief executive officer of the National Home Mortgage Finance Corp.—has since been recalled on a technicality.

Abortion toll: 1 of 6 babies

BY NORMAN BORDADORA

ONE out of six Filipino babies is killed through induced abortion, which in turn is mostly an outcome of poverty and lack of reproductive health systems in the country.

This is one of the dire assessments of the Commission on Population in its State of the Philippine Population Report 2000, which will be issued this month.

"Abortions take place because most women do not have options. If they are educated on the benefits of effective and safe contraception, they would not be burdened with having a pregnancy that happened too soon," said Tomas Osias, executive director of the Popcom.

The Popcom reports that only 46 percent of women of reproductive age have access to safe and effective family planning services and methods. Information and services on fertility management programs might not have been readily available to women, especially those in the rural areas, it said.

Based on estimates on reports of women who had been admitted in hospitals for treatment of complications following an abortion, the commission said, induced abortions numbered from 320,000 to 480,000 a year in the country.

Pineda faces plunder charges

BY V. CONTRERAS

THE INTERIOR department has endorsed the filing of plunder charges against alleged "jueteng" lord Rodolfo "Bong" Pineda, which testimonies in the aborted Estrada impeachment trial revealed as one of the gambling kingpins who had regularly sent bribe money to the deposed president.

Interior Secretary Jose Lina yesterday said he had written Justice Sec. Hernani Perez "to recommend the institution of a complaint" against Pineda and "to subject (him) to further inquiry for the crime of plunder for allegedly delivering sums of money to former President Joseph Estrada as commissions or share in jueteng operations."

Lina said his department's recommendation was based on its "independent evaluation" of the transcripts of the Senate blue ribbon committee hearings on the "Juetengate" scandal and of the impeachment trial itself.

No special registration for new voters

AN ESTIMATED four million first-time voters will not be able to cast ballots in the May 14 elections after the Commission on Elections turned down yesterday requests by youth groups for a special registration day for voters who missed the registration deadline Dec. 27 of last year.

Comelec chair Alfredo Benipayo reiterated the Omnibus Election Code does not allow the registration of voters 120 days before any election. He also said the Comelec was hard-pressed for time, having to prepare for the May 14 national elections.

"We are 30 days behind schedule so we are working double and even triple time," Benipayo said. "It would also be difficult to grant the (youths') request because it would violate the law." *Gerald G. Lacuarta*

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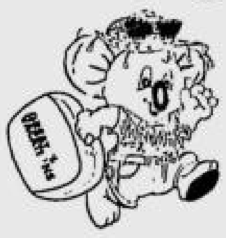

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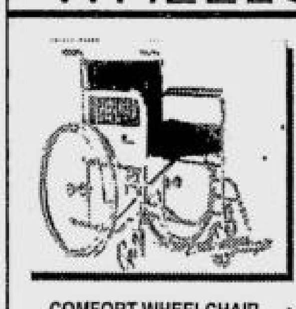

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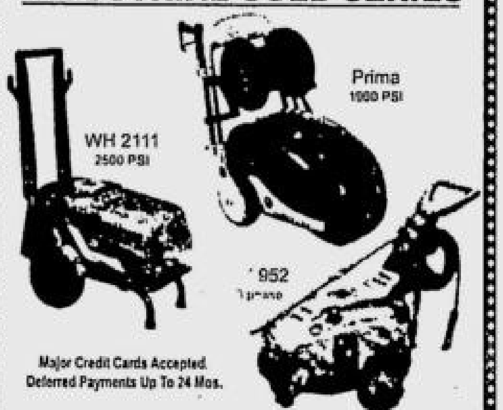

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Stockbrokers: Peso health dependent on SC decision

(From page A1)

The high court is expected to hand down a decision on March 13.

Yesterday, the main-share Phisix closed weaker for the third straight session at 1,613.49 points with investor sentiment slowly turning sour due to concerns about the legitimacy of the new government.

Should the Supreme Court decide that Estrada is still the President, the gains of the market since the Jan. 20 People Power II can be reversed, according to ATR Kim Eng Securities research head Luz Lorenzo.

"It could be very, very negative, to say the least. The loss of confidence could bring the peso back to the previous historical lows of 55 to 56 (against the dollar)," Lorenzo said.

Former movie star Estrada, 63, was toppled in a military-backed popular revolt after the House of Representatives impeached him for corruption but failed to get him thrown out of office after an aborted Senate trial.

A ruling that would get Estrada out of the picture with finality might perk up the market in a way that would replicate the historic increase of 200 basis points right after People Power II, Lorenzo said.

"If the Supreme Court rules for Estrada, the Phisix could go to the other side of 1,600, if it isn't already there before the ruling," said Securities Specialist president Francisco Villaroman.

Villaroman said a pro-Estrada ruling would break the technical support levels at 1,610, 1,570 and 1,530 depending on where the Phisix was at the time the high court hands down its ruling.

Eric Sta. Ana, assistant director for sales at the foreign brokerage house Vickers Ballas Securities, said the 1,600 level was the benchmark of confidence in the Macapagal administration.

He said the benchmark would be breached once the court ruled in favor of Estrada.

Even a ruling proclaiming Estrada a President-on-leave while affirming President Macapagal-Arroyo's legitimacy would still have a negative impact on the stock market, Sta. Ana said.

He said the people wanted to see Estrada behind bars and would not settle for anything less.

Sta. Ana said the technical charts indicated that the peso might strengthen to 45 and 46 against the dollar during the second half of the year unless the Estrada factor negated all rosy prospects.

Erwin Tan, Securities 2000 research head, said a pro-Estrada ruling would drag down the Phisix closer to 1,400 while the peso would again break past the 50:$1 mark.

Asked whether Malacañang was ready for a verdict favorable to Estrada, Perez answered in the affirmative.

"We are ready for it. But we doubt whether the Filipino people will accept it," he said as he asked people not to lose patience in waiting for the Supreme Court's verdict.

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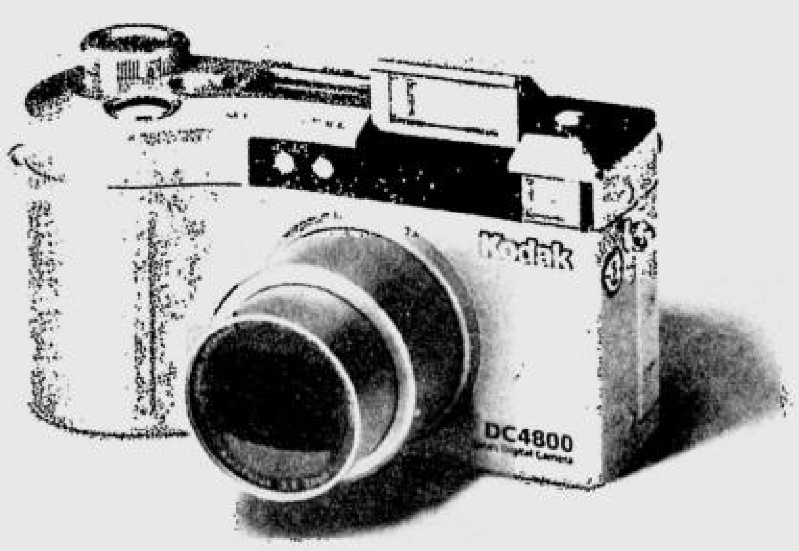

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Perez wants Dichaves to testify vs Estrada

By Cathy Yamsuan

JAIME Dichaves, wherever he is, would be a welcome addition to the government's list of witnesses in the criminal cases to be filed against ousted President Joseph Estrada.

That is if he has any new information that will help unravel the tangle of illegal business transactions that his fallen friend entered into during his incumbency, Justice Secretary Hernando Perez yesterday said.

"The reason why I'm interested in talking to him (is because) his name appears in every corner involving transactions of the former President," Perez noted.

"(Dichaves) could add to the case but he is not indispensable," he added.

Perez was one of the private lawyers who assisted House prosecutors in presenting evidence against Estrada during his impeachment trial.

In particular, Perez wants to hear Dichaves' story about the purchase of the "Boracay" mansion in New Manila, which Estrada allegedly purchased for his mistress Laarni Enriquez.

House prosecutors presented a paper trail, which showed that Estrada had used laundered money to purchase the property for P142 million.

Prosecutors traced the money's source to the bank account of Jose Velarde, an alias which they said Estrada had used to hide his identity, in Equitable PCI Bank.

Dichaves' name cropped up after he claimed ownership of Velarde's bank account and the Boracay property.

Erap: I'm not leaving, I'm ready to go to jail

(From page A1)

(I will never leave you. I will never leave the Philippines, even if they put me behind bars. I am ready to go to prison, they cannot scare me)." Estrada said at a rally for opposition senatorial candidates, including his wife Dr. Eloisa "Loi" Ejercito.

He is facing charges such as graft, plunder and malversation before the Office of the Ombudsman.

The trip to Zamboanga was his first since he was forced out of office on Jan. 20 by a military-backed people's revolt.

The Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan) is not amused that Estrada still moves around the country.

"We abhor the fact that a plunderer is able to roam freely around the country to campaign for his wife and candidates," said Alvin Luque, Bayan-Davao City secretary general and a guest candidate for councilor of the Hugpong sa Mga Tawong Lungsod.

Luque called on President Macapagal-Arroyo to do everything within her powers to put Estrada under house arrest to prevent him from going around the country to campaign.

He asked the Supreme Court to lift the 30-day temporary restraining order stopping the Ombudsman from filing plunder and other cases against Estrada.

Senatorial candidate Perfecto Yasay, the former Securities and Exchange Commission chair who blew the whistle on the BW Resources scandal and later testified against Estrada during his impeachment trial, said no one could prevent the former President from exercising his basic political right to campaign for his candidates.

Yasay said no criminal charge had been filed against Estrada that would warrant a court to order his immediate arrest.

"I think the requirements of due process in our Constitution say that if there is no charge, you can exercise your political rights," Yasay told reporters in Davao City.

Public sympathy

Lyda Canson, chair of Gabriela Davao, said Estrada was not only campaigning for his wife and other opposition senatorial candidates but was actually seeking "political vindication" from the public.

"Estrada is campaigning for public sympathy by playing the underdog and the persecuted. He might be thinking he can sway public opinion to oppose his arrest," Canson said.

Yasay said no matter how strong his sentiments are against Estrada, he must respect the ousted President's basic rights.

But Yasay said that if he had his way, he also wanted Estrada immediately prosecuted and jailed so he could not campaign again.

But Estrada maintained that he had not wronged the people.

"This is why I can face you here because I have done nothing wrong against our countrymen," he said in Filipino.

Estrada also maintained that he was merely "on leave" because of People Power II.

He said a crowd of less than 500,000, mostly the rich, massed at Edsa because they hated him.

Opposition senatorial candidates pointed out that People Power II was an injustice because the rich voided the votes of the poor who had elected Estrada President.

Buoyed by the favorable reaction of the audience, former Press Secretary Ricardo "Dong" Puno said that once elected senator, he and other members of the Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino and Puwersa ng Masa would oust Ms Macapagal from Malacañang.

"*Pagdating natin doon sasabihin natin 'alis diyan, alis diyan, alis diyan'* (Once we capture Congress, 'we'll tell them to get out')," he said.

Two opposition senatorial candidates—broadcaster Noli de Castro and former Defense Secretary Orlando Mercado—opted to campaign on their own.

Upon arrival in Zamboanga City, De Castro and Mercado gave interviews to local radio reporters while the rest of the opposition senatorial candidates toured marketplaces.

At Tuesday night's rally, De Castro was not presen while Mercado slipped out stage when Estrada arrived

Estrada takes PAL flight

Estrada yesterday returned to Manila like an ordinary citizen.

Estrada, who flew Tuesday to Zamboanga de Norte aboard a chartered Subic Air Lear jet, took commercial flight of the Philippine Airlines to Manila early in the morning.

He arrived at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (Naia) at 8:50 a.m. aboard PAL Flight PR 124.

Seen arriving with him was his wife "Loi" an Mercado.

Since the PAL jet was parked at a remote parkin area in Bay 26, Estrada was allowed to disembark a the tarmac where he was fetched by a car. This is par of the courtesy extended to former presidents, according to airport officials.

Estrada's departure for Zamboanga caused a sti at the Naia after it was discovered that his name wa not in the initial flight plan submitted by Subic Air t the Air Transportation Office (ATO).

ATO officials said that the pilot of Subic Air onl informed the Flight Operations Briefing Station o Estrada's inclusion in the flight immediately befor the plane's take-off at 11:05 a.m.

Acting ATO chief Anacleto Venturina ordered a investigation of Subic Air, which is reportedly owne by businessman Pepito Alvarez, for possible violatio of aviation rules.

The airline faces a fine and revocation of permit found to have violated aviation rules.

Airport general manager Edgardo Manda had earlier said that the ATO would impose sanctions o Subic Air for not sticking to its original flight plan.

The initial flight plan was entirely different fro the actual flight plan, officials said.

The passengers listed in Subic Air's first flight pla were pilot Aris Luisito, Senators Juan Ponce Enril and Miriam Defensor-Santiago, Willie Bautista, Norie Comia, MG Katigbak and Joe Dawal.

Those in the second flight plan were Estrada, pil Capt. Jet Villadulid, two photographers and a reporte

Pro-Desierto group

A group representing members of anti-corruptio organizations and the religious sector yesterday aske the Supreme Court to respect the independence of th Office of the Ombudsman, particularly its investigation of Estrada's criminal liabilities.

In a picket, the groups belonging to the Nation Association of Corruption Prevention Units (Nacpu said the high court, politicians, Estrada's lawyers an even the anti-Estrada groups should "leave (Desiert alone" and allow his office to do its job.

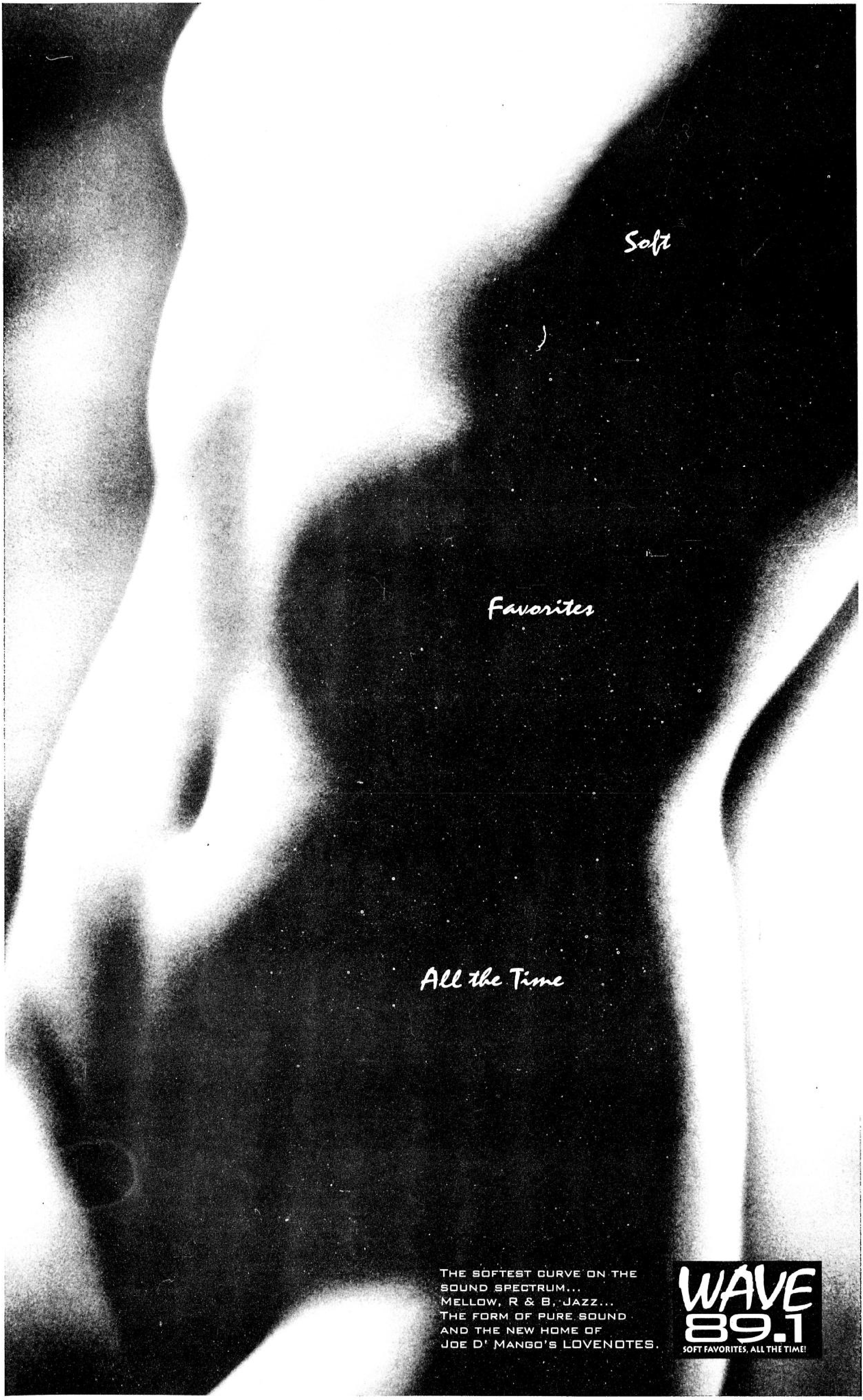
Nacpu urged the Supreme Court to lift the gag order on Desierto and reconsider its decision stoppin him from initiating criminal charges with th Sandiganbayan against Estrada.

About 300 members of Nacpu, the umbrella organization of 304 crime prevention units (CPUs) accredited by the Ombudsman and other groups, went to th Ombudsman's office on Arroceros Street in Mani at 12 noon yesterday.

Also represented during the picket were civic organizations like Bantay Bayan, Lingkod, Volunteer Against Crime and Corruption, Graft-Free Philippine Junior Jaycees and Association of Retired General

"Now that the ball is in the Ombudsman's court. Desierto is under pressure from forces of all side" said Bishop Juan P. Pring of the evangelical group Lingkod and who is also the Nacpu president.

Pring assailed the political pressures being exerted on the Ombudsman. "The Ombudsman's independence should be observed just like the independence of the Senate during the impeachment. They said the Ombudsman is very slow in its investigations and has prosecuted only the 'small fishes.' But now that the Ombudsman is going after the big ones like Estrada, they are suddenly meddling in its investigation," Pring said. ***With reports from TJ Burgonio and Michael Lim Ubac in Manila; and Jowel F. Canuday, PDI Mindanao Bureau***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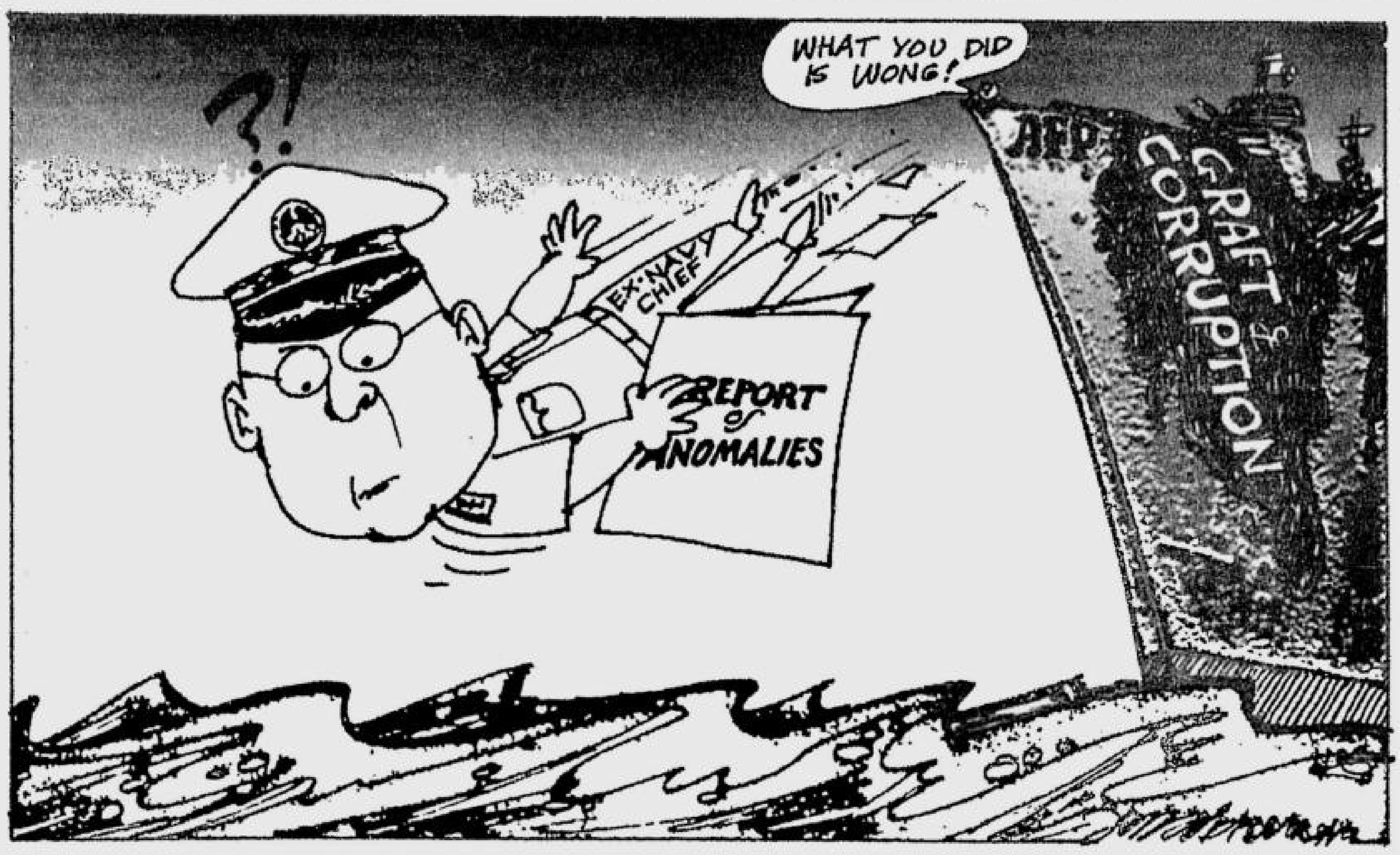


EDITORIALS

Expectations

IF by some strange lapse the movers and shakers don't know it yet, the Macapagal administration comes on the wings of great expectations. Whether these expectations are grounded on reason or not is beside the point at this point. The bottom line is that the constitutional successor to the man who got thrown out on his ear is expected to show that the people's efforts to install her in power against formidable odds (for example, the state's vast resources) are not for naught.

Which is why it behooves President Macapagal and her people to exercise utmost care in choosing those who would occupy the vital positions in the state machinery. This is, or should be, a fundamental factor of governance given the President's avowed disdain for micromanagement and especially because—again—she is expected to show that she is different from her disgraced predecessor in more ways than one.

Unreasonable? Certainly not. After all, the continuing saga of Joseph Estrada is an eloquent discourse on how easily things can fall apart with the wrong choices, even, or particularly, in the matter of friends. Considering the fresh memory of the immediate past—when the presidency itself appeared to be in an outlaw's hands, no matter the plurality of votes that put it there—the people are correct to expect, at the very least, a streamlined process of vetting nominees for high positions.

So why are people with questionable backgrounds getting named to the President's official family? What's this about a new appointee to a housing agency—supposedly the sibling of a former bank president—with alleged fixing and influence peddling in his background? Can it be that Malacañang's search committee has been disbanded with the appointment of its leading lights to top posts (Vicky Garchitorena to the Presidential Management Staff and Patricia Santo Tomas to the Civil Service Commission)?

It is not impertinent to ask these questions. Precisely because of the touted "reformist" quality of the Macapagal administration, it is inevitable that these questions would arise. It doesn't help that early on in the administration there was such a resurgence of "recycled" politicians and Ramos-era officials as to raise the eyebrows of even those with hope brimming. The attentive observer would be moved to ask why the woman who vowed to be a "good president" seems to be saddled with the thought that she has to pay off so many debts. Up to what extent does she intend to do so?

Indeed, does she feel extremely indebted to Lt. Gen. Edgardo Espinosa that she has to announce that the post at Manila's Economic and Cultural Office is "his for the asking"? As is common knowledge, the Meco post is a coveted job not least because of the unaudited funds that go with the territory. With Espinosa supposedly out of contention for the post of Armed Forces chief of staff that Gen. Angelo Reyes will vacate on March 17, did the President think to smooth his ruffled feathers with Meco oil?

The art of the trade-off is not exactly unheard of in this neck of the woods. That it appears to be alive and thriving in the declared Age of Reform indicates that we're in a time warp.

Petulance

HOUSING chief Mike Defensor did not come out smelling like roses in his latest sally into prime time. So he was annoyed that appointments were made in important housing agencies without his knowledge. Fine. He had a right to be. But the threat of resignation that he was supposed to have aired in connection with his annoyance comes across as a (Spice) boy's petulance. This is unbecoming of a member of the Cabinet.

The President was correct in putting Defensor in his place: If he wants to go back to the House, he's welcome to do so. But he should not use the appointment contretemps, for which PMS chief Vicky Garchitorena has apologized, as excuse.

We could be clutching at straws, but occasions like that one suggest that the President can get cracking if she has a mind to. It is unpardonable that glitches in her people's performance—and background—are allowed to get in the way of her administration's program to undo the damage of the past. (Of course, her own decisions can get her in hotter water.) It is imperative to be more popish than Rene Saguisag.

Political dynasties on the march

"The State shall guarantee equal access to opportunities for public service, and prohibit political dynasties as may be defined by law."
—Section 26, Article II, 1986 Constitution

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

WHEN she took her oath of office, the President swore to protect and enforce the Constitution. One of its provisions is the prohibition on political dynasties quoted above. Yet President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo is starting her very own political dynasty by allowing her son, Juan Miguel "Mikey" Arroyo to run as vice governor of Pampanga.

After keeping the people guessing for weeks, the President's son finally filed his certificate of candidacy last Monday, Feb. 26. Despite warnings from civil society groups, who helped Gloria become President, she said she was not going to lift a finger to stop her son's political plans. If the President cannot, and will not, enforce such a simple provision of the Constitution she has sworn to protect, how can we expect her to enforce the more complicated and difficult provisions?

While there is still no implementing law, the President, as the nation's leader, could at least have shown by example her respect for the Constitution and her oath of office by enforcing its intent and provisions in her own family.

She would have been the best role model for the hordes of politicians continuing old dynasties and launching new ones by having their wives and children run for the elective positions they are now occupying but for which they can no longer run because of the three-term limit. Being a member of a political dynasty herself (her father, Diosdado Macapagal, was a congressman and president, and her older sister, Cielo, is a former mayor and vice governor of Pampanga), wouldn't it have been a wonderful gesture on her part had she stopped the march of political dynasties at her doorstep?

Of course, there's no assurance that the other *trapos* will follow her example, but at least that would be a start. And she could have shown that she is a cut above the rest. Another wonderful opportunity lost.

Note that the incumbent vice governor of Pampanga, Clayton Olalia, was pressured into withdrawing from the race to give way to Arroyo's candidacy. After repeatedly asserting his right to the equity of the incumbent in the Lakas-NUCD, Olalia suddenly withdrew from the race. Rumors say First Gentleman Mike Arroyo offered him a government post in exchange, but Olalia denied this, claiming that it was some Lakas mayors and political leaders who asked him to withdraw for the sake of the First Son.

However, this statement of Olalia is very revealing: "If the Macapagal administration decides that I am capable of serving the government in other capacities, then I would gladly (accept) it and I would prefer to serve the youth."

If the President does not see that as a clear signal of solicitation for an appointive position, she must be dense. Expect Olalia's appointment to the executive department, perhaps as presidential adviser for the youth, the position Jamby Madrigal occupied during the Erap regime.

* * *

That provision of the Constitution quoted at the beginning of this column is undoubtedly the most violated provision of the charter, after hordes of members of political dynasties descended on the Commission on Elections the last two days to file their certificates of candidacy. Wives, children, brothers and sisters of sitting politicians threw their hats into the political ring.

There are so many of them I can't remember them all. I can remember only the more notorious ones, among them wife and son of the ousted president, former First Lady Loi Ejercito who is running for senator and JV Ejercito, Erap's son by Guia Gomez, who is running for mayor of San Juan.

Then there is the daughter of Sen. Tessie Aquino-Oreta, who is running in Malabon-Navotas. The son of Sen. Rodolfo Biazon is running in Muntinlupa; the son of former Rep. Roilo Golez now national security adviser, in Parañaque; the son of Mayor Ismael Mathay Jr. in Quezon City; the wife of Rep. Dante Liban in Novaliches, etc.

In many instances, the relatives were made to run only to keep the seats of the political kingpins warm while they sit out in the sidelines for one term—because they are barred from another reelection—before they run again for the next term. The best example of this is in Makati. Three-term mayor, Jejomar Binay, let his wife occupy the post, while he had himself appointed as chair of the Metro Manila Development Authority. In the May elections, he will try to reclaim the mayoralty against Vice Mayor (and actor) Edu Manzano.

In Quezon City, Mathay can no longer run for mayor so he is going to run for congressman (to fill the post now occupied by Speaker Feliciano Belmonte) while another Ismael Mathay (his son "Chuck") runs for mayor against Belmonte.

In Novaliches, Quezon City, Liban can no longer run for the House, so he prevailed on his wife to run while he himself tries to get into the mayor's seat.

If these politicians can't respect and obey just one simple provision of the Constitution, how can we expect them to respect and obey its other provisions?

Trouble in paradise

WINDMILLS

Jerry Barican

THE SUPREME Court case of Estrada versus Macapagal aside, two issues riveted national attention on the government this week.

The more interesting but ultimately less important involved the ruckus over the housing sector. Housing Secretary Mike Defensor, complaining—properly—that he had been reduced to finding out about appointments in his turf in the newspapers, reportedly offered his resignation to the President and is now intending to run for his old congressional seat. Unbelievably, when he was asked about this, Executive Secretary Rene de Villa professed to be unaware of what was happening all around him.

Presidential Management Staff Secretary Vicky Garchitorena, on the other hand, the Cabinet member who allegedly engineered the debated appointments, publicly apologized to Defensor. Her explanation, however, did not clear things up. Yes, by protocol, Defensor sits to her right in Cabinet meetings. But it somehow never occurred to her to turn in that direction to inquire whether the National Housing Authority and other similarly named agencies may have had anything to do with the housing chief. Instead, she consulted the finance secretary. There is trouble, it seems, in paradise.

Still, this situation is far more normal in government than first appears. Despite the hurt feelings, political embarrassment, administrative confusion and disarray in the housing program, the matter will eventually resolve itself. Either Defensor will end up master of his own house, maintaining the all-important confidence of the President, or he (or his replacement) will be a cipher, remote-controlled from somewhere else. For the public, which wants transparency and accountability, the former is a far preferable outcome to the latter. Unfortunately, logic rarely counts for much in government.

Despite the supposed processes and procedures, every administration comes face to face with the truth that cliques and claques are easier to banish in rhetoric than in reality. Human nature is more powerful than good intentions. Power gravitates to those bold—and ruthless—enough to exercise it. Results are what count.

Consequently, we can give the parties involved in this little fracas the benefit of the doubt for now. Each new administration has some 4,000 presidential appointments to sort out. It is hard enough to choose them from the list of perhaps 40,000 aspirants. It is too much too soon to expect them also to sing in unison like the Mormon Tabernacle Choir just yet.

The more serious concern must be what is happening in the military. No one expects anything serious or immediate to happen, but there are clear warnings that the cohesiveness of the military establishment and its presumed commitment to civilian supremacy and democracy can no longer be taken for granted.

The evidence is in the headlines. The subterfuge and conspiracy that, by its nature, had to form part of the military component of Edsa II have started a process that could not be ended with the departure of Joseph Estrada from Malacañang. Instead, the fissures in the Armed Forces have widened and the effect is not calming. Neroism is in the air.

Although her words have been reassuring, the President by her actions has recognized the problem. She has spent much time visiting and trying to win over the troops. *Arma virumque cano* (Of arms I sing) has been the bewitching melody of her praise to them. These have been followed by inducements of a more practical nature, including pay and benefit increases. Meanwhile, a variant of People Power, military-style, has forced the Navy chief to go. Now, various factions are demanding or threatening this or that. The President needs to address this problem decisively.

One thing that can help her do that is for the Supreme Court to speedily resolve the issue of the legality of her installation and the basis of her legitimacy. A second is to get her new national security team quickly and firmly in place. These include a permanent defense secretary, a new Armed Forces chief of staff, and the new service heads and senior staff of the military. She should then let them do their jobs and focus her attention on the economy.

Most important, it is now time for the President to articulate the vision and goals of her presidency. It is no longer enough that she is not Erap. She also needs to tell people what it is that she is trying to do. Cory Aquino was about restoring democracy. Fidel Ramos said he would focus on economic reform. Joseph Estrada told us he would speak for the common man and restore peace and order. President Macapagal now needs to define her administration.

By trying to be all things to all people, this administration will be losing the opportunity to do just that. Defining goals will do more to solidify support, including in the military, than the current ambiguity. It is not enough that we know what this administration is against; we also need to know what it is for. If it says nothing or says too much, the indelible impression will be that it is for business as usual, for *trapos*, for victory in elections, for rewarding friends and punishing enemies, for recycled faces and ideas. That would be a tragedy for an administration whose lofty goals were so eloquently highlighted in the President's inaugural speech.

Finally, the new administration needs to explain itself better. It should sound more like a government and less like it were merely campaigning to win the May elections. It needs to explain its positions and programs more articulately. Since the President does not give ambush interviews, more of the senior Malacañang staff need to be more accessible to the media. If Secretary Renato Corona is being groomed for other office, a permanent spokesperson of the administration needs to be found. Even Adam himself found a need to explain the snakes in paradise.

Marines' ruffled egos covering up irregularities?

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

OKAY, perhaps resigned Navy chief Guillermo Wong violated sound public relations when he dressed down the officers of the Marines in front of their enlisted personnel a week ago. So perhaps *napahiya ang mga* macho *na* officers. The straight-shooting Wong has admitted that he may have erred in his behavior and has apologized for it.

But the way the officers of the Marines have been making a mountain out of that *ipinahiya* episode is not making them look good. Apart from looking like people with monstrous egos, they are beginning to appear like they're putting up a smoke screen to hide some irregularities in the Marine corps. Their sob story about wounded pride is beginning to look like a diversionary tactic.

* * *

For Joseph Estrada, the 13th president of the Republic, who is totally allergic to the No. 13, it may be ominous indeed that the 13 members of the Supreme Court are set to rule on the question of the legitimacy of the Macapagal presidency on March 13. Is the Court telegraphing how it is going to vote, by setting the big ruling one day before the Ides of March?

* * *

Last Tuesday I cited former Senate President Jovy Salonga's opinion that for all intents and purposes Erap is finished, and the nation's the better for it. Isabela Rep. Heherson Alvarez, for his part, opined that Estrada and his "semantical illusionist" can delude themselves that he is still president, "but the rest of the sane portion of our nation cannot abide by that insanity." In fact, Alvarez pointed out, even Erap's defense counsel, Pacifico Agabin, in a revealing moment, gave us a clue of what goes on in his mind: Erap is no longer president. In a letter to the Office of the Ombudsman dated Feb. 2, 2001, Agabin wrote: "Gentlemen, may I respectfully request for a certified true copy of the Order promulgated on 22 January 2001, addressed to former President Joseph E. Estrada in connection with OMB-0-0Q-1629, OMB-0-00-1754 to OMB-0-00 1758." There you have it from his own counsel, Alvarez said: Joseph Estrada is a "former president."

Perhaps on March 13 the high magistrates will only follow the thinking of Estrada's lawyer.

* * *

Malacañang's admission that it doesn't have the votes to oust Marcos/Estrada associate Eduardo Cojuangco from the chairmanship of San Miguel Corp. bothered some observers. With reason. Right now the Palace admits to having only two seats in the 15-member SMC board, those of the SSS and GSIS. But if the government-sequestered 27-percent CIIF shares are counted, they would bring in an additional four seats. So government would have a total of six seats.

Getting back those CIIF seats should not be a problem as those shares are sequestered. Recall that right after Estrada assumed power, the voting rights to those shares were allowed to be exercised by Cojuangco, in addition to his own 20-percent shares and a few other proxy shares. That was how he got control of SMC.

The feeling is that if the government really worked hard up to the April 1, 2001 stockholders' meeting, it could still get two more seats and thus majority of the SMC board. The question is, does it want to?

* * *

Another question being asked is, why hasn't the government filed the case before the Supreme Court, seeking to settle the real nature of the coco levy funds once and for all? The Cojuangco-controlled Cocofed beat the government to the draw three weeks ago when it filed its own case seeking that resolution. This issue became even more relevant after then President Estrada, about three months before his ouster, signed the controversial EO 313, assigning control of P50 billion of the levy funds to the Cojuangco group, purportedly to help the impoverished coconut farmers through development projects. Observers fear that postponing the resolution of that issue only strengthens that group's hand especially in the coming elections.

* * *

Reelectionist Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago is in trouble. In the 1992 presidential elections her region, Western Visayas, gave her such an overwhelming majority that for a few days, as returns from that region poured in, she looked like the winner already. In fact, Fidel Ramos made it by the skin of his teeth with a margin of just 800,000 votes. Now Santiago appears to have fallen out of favor with her own *kasimanwa*, with the latest surveys showing she's running only No. 17 on Panay island. If she's doing so poorly in her region, how will she fare in the others?

* * *

Earlier I wrote about the party-list system which has been described by Akbayan Rep. Etta Rosales as "a nightmare in the making" due to the fact that while the party list is getting longer and longer, it seems to be moving farther and farther from the original spirit envisioned by the Constitution. The charter mandates that 20 percent of the 250 seats (51 seats) in the House are to be filled by grass-roots organizations. The idea is to give the "marginalized and under-represented" sectors of society greater participation in the law-making process, which has historically favored the elite and wealthier classes. But it seems that fleshing out this constitutional provision, despite its enabling law, RA 7941, has become a big problem.

* * *

I ran into Rosales recently and she said things were still quite muddled since we last talked at Popoy Lagman's wake. She pointed out that 56 new groups have been accredited by the Comelec, bringing the total to 179 groups, with 11 more awaiting accreditation. One problem seems to be that many groups that have traditionally come in through the front door now also want to do so via the back door.

For instance, the other party-list representative had fought to ban the entry of national political parties into the party-list system for at least another term, in order to level the playing field for the people's organizations. Under the law the big groups may do so in the May 2001 elections. But in the recent Congress, the party-list representatives' bill was not even calendared for deliberations in the House.

* * *

Because they couldn't get that ban, all the big political parties such as Lakas, NPC and LDP are joining the party-list elections. In fact, Ernie Maceda is said to be running as a partly-list candidate of the NPC. In addition, the May elections will see the participation of the likes of Erap's JEEP and the Marcos Loyalists Association of the Philippines as well as such affluent and elite groups as the Philippine Medical Association, the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industries and the Security Agencies Association. Why, even the Movement Against Drugs will field Richard Gomez, which, Rosales grumbles, is linked with the PNP.

By the way, former NDF chief Satur Ocampo is running under Bayan Muna, which is a most welcome development.

Voices of women

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

THEY call it the "*kandilaan*" or candle factory. Actually, it's little more than a shed in the front yard of Nanay Sonia's home, on a lot that straddles the boundary between Makati and Manila, just a spit away from the railroad tracks.

"We want to add more equipment, but we're not sure how much longer we'll be staying here," says Marilyn Sandro, president of the Association of Women in Action for Rights and Empowerment, or Batis-AWARE. Turns out that someone has produced a title for the lot on which Nanay Sonia and her family have lived for around 30 years. There have been threats of eviction and demolition. "So we wait and see from day to day," says Marilyn.

AWARE is a group of former women entertainers who had worked in Japan and borne children by Japanese fathers, as well as the guardians and relatives of such children. It was the issue of the lack of recognition and support for their "Japino" (a term the women themselves find distasteful) children that drew the women to Batis, an NGO working for the rights and welfare of women returning from work overseas. Founded in 1989, Batis, which has ties with other Japan-based NGOs, has served over 1,000 women and children, but it is best known for its advocacy work on behalf of Filipino-Japanese children and their mothers and guardians.

In 1996, the former "clients" of Batis became its partners when they organized themselves into Batis-AWARE. Recently, the children, many of them teenagers by now, formed their own group, Batis-Yoghi, for Youth Organization Gives Hope and Inspiration.

* * *

BACK to the *kandilaan*. Delayed by traffic, we arrive at dusk but find the women still hard at work. A huge steel vat, heated by a wood fire beneath, is the center of the operations. Here, strips of paraffin are melted and then poured into molds for vigil candles. The women then remove by hand the candles from their molds and attach the wicks. The candle shop delivers 25-30 boxes of these small white vigil candles to the Baclaran Church each week.

I'm struck by the thought of thousands of Baclaran devotees lighting the vigil candles in hopes of getting their prayers heard, all the while providing employment—and hope—to women seeking a new life and pouring their own prayers into each little candle.

"Our shop can do so much more!" says Marilyn, "and if we receive more orders, we can hire more women." Guiltily, I think back to the various "designer" candles I've bought in the last few years, scented, decorated, in fashionable hues and for which I was willing to shell out scandalous amounts.

And yet here were the women—six full-time workers and two part-time—banking on the sales of their simple utilitarian candles to keep them and their families going. Nanay Sonia looks after a Japanese-Filipino grandchild, whose mother is somewhere in Japan, exact whereabouts unknown. The other women—Prescila, Nemia, Ruby, Jean, Carmela, Baby and "just" Sonia—all worked in Japan and have children to support. "When I need money, I ask to work here at the candle shop," says Ruby.

* * *

I'M telling you about the *kandilaan* because of two things. One, it's the first day of March, which is observed as Women's Month, since the International Day of Women is celebrated on March 8. The second is that on the morning of the day of my visit to the candle shop, I met Deepa Narayan, a consultant with the World Bank and lead author of a three-part study called "Voices of the Poor."

Using a research approach called participatory poverty assessment, teams talked with over 40,000 women and men in 50 countries around the world. The approach is unique in that the poor respondents were asked to talk directly about their definition of poverty, and how being poor defined, confined or liberated them.

"Poverty is pain," says a woman from Moldovia. "It feels like a disease. It attacks a person not only materially but also morally. It eats away one's dignity and drives one into total despair."

As the authors of "Voices of the Poor" found, being poor is not just to be lacking in the material comforts. It is also to lose one's dignity and identity. And worse, it takes away one's ability to choose and decide. For poor people around the world, it is the poverty of choices that is the most painful to bear.

* * *

"WHEN we go into poor people's homes as outsiders," the authors say at the study's conclusion, poor people open their lives, their joys and their suffering to us, and we experience their dignity, their wisdom and their warm hospitality. It is difficult for us to practice direct reciprocity, but we can communicate their voices."

I met the women of Batis and of Batis-AWARE in the course of preparing to write stories of Filipino women survivors of trafficking, which will be compiled into a book and advocacy instrument of Unifem Philippines. I had put down on tape the women's stories of victimization, which began long before they had fallen into the nets cast by international sex traffickers. But even before I started my first interview, Olive Cervantes, executive director of Batis Center for Women, asked that since the women had "moved on," in telling their stories, I shouldn't dwell too much on their victimization, but rather on their empowerment.

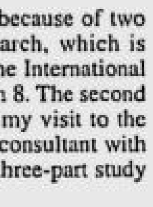
Which may be the reason they insisted that I visit the *kandilaan*, for however humble an effort it may be today, it nonetheless represents a step toward self-reliance and autonomy, toward recovering the sense of dignity and pride in their work and themselves that had been lost along the way.

And it is to listen to the voices of such women that we should do today, for the rest of month, and in the future.

Hope from the 'hidden'

HUMAN FACE

Ma. Ceres P. Doyo



THE LENTEN Season started yesterday. In my head I have wickedly conjured up a cartoon scene that shows candidates on the campaign trail looking like happy penitents doing their Via Crucis. Instead of dragging heavy crosses, they are carrying light wooden benches on their shoulders, a literal portrayal of the Filipino saying "*nagbubuhat ng sariling bangko* (raising one's own bench)," which means unabashed self-praise. And when these candidates reach the Calvary they have invented for themselves where they expect to be raised up (on their benches) as great icons of self-sacrifice, they find out, to their dismay, that there are crosses reserved for them, to which their constituents will nail them if they renege on their promises.

Nowadays when candidates are loudly trumpeting their achievements and what they hope to achieve in order to deserve our votes, these days when humility is left at home and chest-pounding is the preferred body language, it feels good to learn about individuals whose work is "hidden," who, in contrast, silently toil without thinking of votes, who give of themselves because that is the thing to do and they have no doubts. They remind me of what a wise person said while we were trekking the Himalayas of the soul. When in doubt, this highly evolved being said, one should ask oneself: What is the most loving thing to do?

A few weeks ago, a man named Antonio L. Javellana died after a lingering illness. I knew him not. But I received calls and notes from people who wanted to let the world know about him.

Javellana was a landlord, but a rare one. He took the side of the banana farmworkers. Wrote Enrico G. Cabanit who represents an association of farmworkers: "He was an enlightened landlord who never showed resentment when his big landholding was covered with CARP. He gave support (to farmworkers) when they staged a picket to protest the onerous contract between Stanfilco and the workers. Mr. Javellana stood at the forefront where fox holes and trenches had been dug by workers to prevent the company trucks from passing. Heavily armed military and police personnel hired by management to suppress the action failed. The main factor was the presence of Mr. Javellana who bravely stood with the group and was willing to risk his own life."

After the contract had been successfully revoked and Certificates of Land Ownership had been granted, Javellana helped the workers improve their farms. "Please be informed," Cabanit stressed, "that up to this writing, the Department of Agrarian Reform never gave any form of support services."

Oscar Santos, head of the Food First Information and Action Network (FIAN-Phil.), who joined the fact-finding mission in banana land, had this to say: "Being able to transcend one's class and go the side of the disadvantaged is without doubt admirable. One who is able to do that could easily be ostracized and treated like a pariah by his class, disowned by his friends, even by his own kin. And most of all, he has to do with less—less landholding, less cash, and, therefore, less luxuries and comforts. But surely he becomes a better person because he is in bed with humanity. Antonio L. Javellana has set the example."

Said Ernest Reyes of the Mindanao Farmworkers Development Center: "*Pag tumitindig, talagang titindig. Prontera pa. Tulad noong* picket *ng 1996. Ayaw ng mga* farmworkers *na makalabas ang mga* vans loaded with bananas. *Sabi niya, kung gusto ninyo...pati paa ko ipapasagasa ko. Wala kaming maiganti kay* Sir. *Pag* birthday, *hinaharana na lang namin siya.*"

In 1998 Javellana initiated the formation of the Banana Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries Alliance in the plantations of the Davao provinces which fought the banana cartel. One of Javellana's dreams was a pilot farm, one hectare in size, which could have a gross income of P1 million a year, at an expense of P150,000.

There are others who have worked quietly but consistently. Like the recent batch of Aurora Aragon Quezon Peace Awardees. Police Senior Supt. Charlemagne Salamat Alejandrino led a campaign in Quezon and Sulu to rid the police ranks of scalawags, spearheaded the fight against illegal drugs and firearms and busted a drug syndicate.

Fr. Michel Marie Joseph de Gigord has been kidnapped twice and held hostage for long periods and yet this has not stopped him from working for peace and dialogue between warring Christian and Muslim groups through the Bishops-Ulama Forum.

Sr. Michelle Gamboa, a Good Shepherd nun, transformed her inherited land in Negros into a model community of daily paid, sugar workers who later acquired the land they tilled, inspiring landowners and workers to interact harmoniously. She contributed to the culture of peace in places where she had been assigned.

Italian Fr. Peter Geremia, has spent 29 years among the poor *lumads* of Mindanao, sharing their poverty and powerlessness and working to uplift them, defending their ancestral land from loggers and miners at great risk to his life. He had been targeted for assassination.

I must mention the Avon-DECS Gintong Ilawan Award, now on its 12th year, for private high school principals. (This was for public school principals in the past.) Judging was quite an experience—feeling their triumphs and pain and the passion they put into their work, for the sake of the young. Congratulations to the 14 regional winners and this year's most outstanding, Sr. Anna Carmela Pesongco of Assumption Iloilo who helped consolidate the Assumption schools in Panay in order to reach out (creatively, I must say) to students from different social backgrounds.

There is reason to hope.

Dear ma'am

YOUNGBLOOD

Biagko

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

SHE is 16 years my senior. She is a Biology teacher at a private school in the north. She is smart, charming and attractive in her simplicity. No wonder she easily captured my 14-year-old heart.

It was a first in my life, a feeling so strange yet special. I spent sleepless nights thinking about her, replaying in my mind her intelligent discussion of the day's lesson, her confidently delivered lecture, her warm smile and her eyes that showed authority. There was a certain mystery about her, an aura that drew me closer and closer to her.

My young heart violently throbbed at the sight of her. The mention of her name sent my spirits soaring. I was cautious, conscious and clumsy in her presence. She inspired me to study well so that I could impress her with smart answers in recitations and exams.

Initially, I thought it was purely admiration, hero worship or perhaps a teenage crush. I thought the feeling would go away after some time.

I was wrong. No amount of rationalization could convince me it was not love. Each day that passed made the feeling more intense, more sincere, more honest. I had to tell her how I felt, because I could no longer bear to suffer in silence.

And so, with an unsigned note, I told her she was special—and that I was falling for her. It was liberating and at the same time agonizing, for I didn't know how she would react if she found out it was me. I kept my distance and avoided any chance of eye contact which would give me away.

That note was followed by another. And another.

I didn't notice any significant change in her, so I felt my secret was safe. I didn't tell anybody about it either for fear that it might spoil the love I undoubtedly felt for her.

That summer, I frequently saw her in school. We worked on our school paper while they were required to render summer service. Surprise of surprises, she gave me a present on my birthday and with it a note that said I was special, too.

I felt my knees shaking, my heart rapidly pulsating, my blood draining. So, she knew all along. But what did that present mean? It thrilled and yet it puzzled me no end.

That incident paved the way for friendship to develop between her and me. We exchanged notes constantly but we had to be discreet about the whole thing. It was no ordinary friendship and surely, no one would understand at first. She was my teacher and I felt it was my responsibility to protect her interest over mine.

Every weekend, I visited her at home in the disguise of submitting a project or asking questions about an assigned report. She welcomed me warmly.

One time, I came to her wet from the rain. She instantly dried me with a towel and offered a dry shirt.

The days that followed saw us exchanging glances every so often. We understood each other's unspoken words. She never failed to start my day right by flashing her sweet smile. I would pass by her classroom more often than I had to. There was so much affection that needed to be expressed, but her status prevented me from doing so. She was so respectable and dignified, and I did not want to mar that with any talk that might spread about us.

Finally, she told me she loved me too. That was on June 25, 1987. My world stood still. I could not believe what I was hearing. She loves me!

I wanted to shout, perhaps, even scream that I loved her too. It was one jubilant moment I'd constantly play back on my mind.

I remember very well the first time I reached out for her hand. She did not resist. With our fingers entwined, I knew I never wanted to let go of her. She was my life. My world revolved around her.

Soon I had to go for college. I left with a heavy heart. Part of me wanted to stay and another part of me wanted to find my place in the sun—for her. She said I was bringing along with me her heart and her prayers.

The first days of my freshman year tore me to pieces. I wrote her letters every day, sent her chocolates and flowers, filled an entire manila paper with "I love you's," and went home every time I had the chance.

She wrote back and every letter that I received took away my loneliness and gave me the needed push to persevere. Our letters sustained us in our absence and distance from each other. I read each of her letters over and over again, memorizing the lines that spoke of her love.

One semestral break, I asked her out. We went on our first date ever to watch a movie about extinct dinosaurs coming back to life. In the dark, I held her close, her cheek against mine. Soon we were kissing. Too long had I waited for that moment. I was ecstatic. the electricity was all over. I loved her so much.

Fate, however, would not allow our relationship to go on like that forever. It was my fault. I proved to be weak and unable to hold on to the beauty of our relationship. I opened the door to people and welcomed them to my world.

My letters became scarce and eventually silence followed. I was too engrossed in my own world, struck by the variety and novelty of each new experience. I forgot about her. But I did not hear anything that suggested she was accusing me of abandoning her.

I found myself in a relationship which lasted for just six months. It couldn't compare with the relationship I had with her.

Hurting and bruised, I ran to her. She accepted me back without questions or conditions. "A pail of dirty water does not make the ocean dark," she said. Prodigal lover that I was, I knew my heart had found its way home in her.

The second chance she gave me made us make up for lost time. We proved to be more affectionate and expressive of our love.

The ways were countless. She always brought something for me each time she went out of town. I gave her my first salary. We showered each other with small presents that proved we were never far from each other's heart and mind. Of course, we had our dreams, too, which included growing old together.

I was so at home with her. We shared the same passion for literary works, movies, food, music and laughter. She accepted me for what I was—fat, warts, scars, moods and all. There were no pretenses.

Every time I looked at her, my heart never failed to beat a bit faster. There was magic, intensity, love in its purest and sincerest form.

I am now 28. She is in her 40s. I have loved her for 14 years—half of my life. I am finishing my degree in law. She is now a department head in the school where our story started.

Most people go through their lives searching but never finding the purpose of their existence. Several times in the past, I lost my way too. My life went in circles, trapped in patterns that led to a maze. But I found my direction in her. Now, I have a clear sense of purpose: to be with her until I breathe my last.

This is not an ordinary story but like most love stories, it is not without the usual trials and problems: petty quarrels, misunderstandings and arguments. There was never a major quarrel, though. We never raised our voices or uttered words that would cause the other pain. I could never do anything to hurt her. And never, never will I make her cry.

With her, I have peace of mind. And that matters a lot. I have known her loyalty and fidelity. I am truly happy with her and I will continue to be so because I know I made the right choice. Never mind if this relationship goes against conventions. Never mind if this is continuously being questioned as regards its rightness or wrongness. Never mind if society frowns on such relationships. Never mind if she and I are of the same sex.

"Biagko" is a term of endearment which means "my life."

Notice to Youngblood contributors

Contributors to Youngblood who haven't received their checks are requested to inquire with the PDI cashier on Friday.

Cautionary tale

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

ADMINISTRATION candidates are aghast that Sen. Nene Pimentel should predict that only four of them would win seats in the next Senate, and that six of ousted President Joseph Estrada's men would do so, the rest accounted for by independents. Indeed, they are aghast that he would say Loi Ejercito would be a shoo-in as senator because the public perceives her to be an underdog, a martyr to be exact, who has suffered much in life and deserves better. And furthermore that the elections might prove to be a vindication for Erap.

I don't know if that it is a misreading of the public mood, even if it says the most cynical things about the Filipino voter. I myself am not as pessimistic (or optimistic—I do not know now where Pimentel is coming from) about the outcome of the senatorial elections. I do think the people who figured prominently in the impeachment trial—there are at least eight of them: Joker Arroyo, Franklin Drilon, Juan Flavier, Serge Osmeña, Jun Magsaysay, Manny Villar (who staged a coup in Congress), Winnie Monsod (because of her TV commentaries), and Bobby Tañada (though arguably to a very limited extent, the trial never reached their part of it)—have more than a good chance of barging through.

Pimentel, I think, underestimates the impact of that trial in the public mind, a proceeding that became more popular than "Rosalinda" at its height. And one that created its share of heroes and villains—such is the boon and bane of popular culture. The May elections should have some revelations there.

But having said this, I must also say that it's good that the People Power Coalition candidates are made to confront the worst to discourage them from complacency. Pimentel's prediction about the future is no more iron-clad than that of the surveys. But it may be treated as a cautionary tale, the shape of things to come if the People Power Coalition candidates do not exert themselves to win the vote.

The countervailing forces are there. I did also say a couple of weeks ago that I worried about the effects of the aftermath of People Power II on the elections. If Erap had been acquitted, I'd have been willing to bet the results of the May elections would have been like those of the November elections of 1971, the year that saw the Plaza Miranda bombing. It would have been a rout for Erap's candidates. Hell hath no fury than the Filipinos given the dirty finger. But Erap wasn't acquitted, he was thrown out. With the result that he can now reprise the role of the underdog with potentially awesome consequences for the elections. JV Ejercito did produce a powerful line when he complained about their enemies' plan to run after them for corruption: Now that they were down, he said, people wanted to kick them. He mistakes prosecution for persecution, but he can always conscript popular culture to blur the distinction and win sympathy for their cause.

I did say also that I worried that President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo wanted to make the elections her test of acceptability. She reduces the contest into a choice between her and Erap, and her anointed will reap the whirlwind. I don't know even now that she would win against Erap in "snap elections," notwithstanding her and Erap's current relative standings in the surveys. The only one, I think, who can beat Erap there would be Hilario Davide Jr. He it is who has captured the popular imagination as the ideal public official and he can give Erap, notwithstanding that he cannot speak Tagalog, a fight for the respect, if not affection, of the *masa*.

There is yet one more reason to worry. This is our tendency as a people to rise to glorious heights one moment and to fall to abject depths the next. Indeed, to do the one shining thing in one moment of time, as the song goes, and to lapse into interminable mediocrity afterward, as the reality kicks in. I've said this before: It's not that we're not heroic, it's that we are so foolish the rest of the time we are compelled to rise to heroism at some point to end the product of our folly. We are like the Ginebra team, or the old one at least. We play badly for most of the basketball game and resort to heroics in the last two minutes. That is probably what explains the phenomenal popularity of that team. But it is not the way to win games.

There is the monumental danger that we won a great victory at Edsa only to lose a great defeat in the polls. Stranger things have been known to happen, and if the pattern of our life is anything to go by, that is not very strange at all. Even as I speak, the entertainment personalities are back in full force, little believing that what happened to Erap will happen to them. Or at least, little believing the public has turned its back on them and will register its scorn in the polls. Their posters are all over the place, and television is full of them—which quite incidentally raises all sorts of questions about fairness in media exposure. But the sight of them is truly a cause for anxiety and for asking ourselves if we as a people do learn our lessons.

Can the People Power Coalition candidates prevent this from happening? Maybe. But it will take more than stomping the wilds from dusk till dawn to be able to do it. It will take vision, the kind that inspires, the kind that lifts people from ordinariness, the kind that keeps the flames of People Power alive. The burden of proof has fallen on their shoulders in this new trial, or ordeal. If Erap were still president, from an act of betrayal by the Senate, the task would have been easier. All they would have had to do was point to the obscenity that was the Erap administration and demand that the voters do something about it. Now they are in power—and like it or not, are seen as extensions of Ms Macapagal's administration—and need to prove they deserve it. At the very least, they need to prove they are the better alternative to show-biz glitter, the kind that sets the world aglow, or to Erap-like populism, the kind that, like dope, gets people to feel good while committing suicide.

The task before the People Power Coalition candidates is nothing less than to loom larger than life, which is what People Power, the spirit they invoke, is in the first place. That image isn't there—yet. I do hope they do get to project it in time—but surely they must have advisers in that respect? Or else, well, there's always Pimentel's prediction to stalk them at every turn.

* * *

Comments are welcome at dequiros@vasia.com

Issue-based politics?

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

MORE and more Filipinos are becoming frustrated with the way leaders are elected based on their projection in media, on their charisma and looks. Now everyone seems to be talking about the need for "issue-based politics" but I wonder if we really know what this means. In fact, I'm worried that some politicians may be creating still another form of vacuous politics by claiming to be "issue-based" even as they continue the old rhetoric.

We need to first understand why our politics has deteriorated into an issue-less competition of personalities. I think that to a large extent this happened because of our fear of ideology, one which is in turn based on a fear of anything that seems "Left." It's a legacy from the Americans and the Red scare they propagated during the last half of the 20th century. It was, and still is, dangerous to be suspected of being a communist, a label all too quickly attached on anyone espousing "progressive" ideas.

"Progressive" is itself an arbitrary label. In the 1950s, for example, the Philippine Medical Association attacked legislators who supported the establishment of the Social Security System (yes, our SSS) because that was considered "socialist"! Through the years, the label "communist" has been tacked on people who advocate, among other issues, land reform, minimum wages, socialized (bad, bad word!) tuition fees.

It's not surprising, then, that during elections, even the more reform-oriented politicians keep their silence about how they intend to bring about change, except for vague rhetorical generalizations. Politicians just afford to alienate potential campaign funders, who still come mainly from the business sector.

We've therefore ended up with parties and politicians without any real platforms. Unfortunately, we'll probably see more of this platform-less politics in this year's elections. Only the Left parties like Bayan Muna and the Partido ng Manggagawang Pilipino will have specific platforms that will state the parties' positions on issues like privatization, "free trade," land reform and other social issues. Expect the mainstream parties to continue to say a lot and yet say nothing.

The irony is that while Americans profess disdain for political ideologies, their politics is actually very ideological. There you can distinguish a Democrat from a Republican and this applies not just to the politicians but also to the citizens themselves. In broad strokes, Republicans are "conservative" while Democrats are "liberal" with divergent views on many issues ranging from foreign policy to taxation, from the death penalty to abortion.

We still don't have those distinctions here; instead, we have a bunch of opportunistic politicians jumping from one party to another or setting up their own while citizens are for the most part left out to drift without any ideological moorings. It's not surprising then that people's votes are based on personalities rather than issues.

If we can't pin down politicians on "grand" issues like their programs for national development, then let's get them on more specific issues. Again it's citizens who need to take the initiative here, pressuring the politicians to explain where they stand on, say, women's issues. People have to be specific since even the dumbest politician knows he or she has to be politically correct and proclaim support for women. I know several women's groups are already positioning themselves to ask the candidates in the May elections about their views on access to family planning, an issue that cropped up because local politicians like Manila Mayor Lito Atienza and Laguna governor (and now interior secretary) Joey Lina banned artificial contraception in their government offices.

Environmentalist groups also need to be that specific. What exactly do the politicians intend to do in relation to waste management? Youth groups and teachers' associations can pin the politicians down on their views about support for State universities and colleges, which the last crop of legislators has been strangling to death. Muslims have to flex their political muscle and challenge politicians to explain their stand on "macro" issues such as autonomy as well as more "micro" issues, for example, how the Muslim youth might be given more opportunities for higher education.

No group should think of themselves as insignificant. In Europe, environmental groups became so powerful as lobbying groups they eventually formed Green Parties that now field candidates for public office. In the United States, senior citizens have been a major force in politics as they pester candidates and elected officials on their programs to solve the problem of high costs of medicines.

The pressure must come from organized groups who can convince the politicians their issue will determine "winnability" and that a politician who evades the issues will lose votes. Politicians pay for public opinion polls and for researchers who monitor media for "winnable" issues. The rich and the powerful are good at making themselves heard; it's time cause-oriented groups get into the act as well.

The struggle for issue-based politics does not end with the election. We have to get the politicians' statements and promises on record, and hold them accountable after they're elected into office. Watch them through their three-year terms as they vote on various bills. When elections come around, we act and vote them back in, or out. We could start now with President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and her inaugural vows to tackle graft and corruption, making it clear that if she decides to run in 2004—that being an issue in itself—then her chances of winning are going to depend on how she performs starting with the day she came into office.

* * *

Comments can be sent to miguel@pinoykasi.org

How to win labor's vote

IF the senatorial candidates want to win favor with workers, then they should lay down a decidedly pro-labor agenda, and not just put together the usual, generic supposedly pro-people platform.

Workers, like the rest of the voting public, are more discriminate and politically demanding this time around. Ousted President Joseph Estrada's shocking and shameless exploits as a supposed "public servant" have opened the eyes of the electorate and made the people more watchful of government officials. Edsa II meanwhile gave a thorough lesson in governance: no official is exempt from public scrutiny and all officials bar none risk being thrown out of office if they go against the people's will.

As the crisis in the Philippine economy worsens, the militancy of the people to demand immediate and concrete reforms also intensifies. Our determination to see reforms under this new administration is greater. To win the vote of organized labor, candidates should pass labor's standards. The senatorial candidates must issue concrete positions against:

- Contractualization and other labor flexibility schemes.
- Massive and illegal retrenchment and layoffs.
- Trade union and human rights violations as perpetrated by police, military and other mercenary standards.
- Anti-union policies such as no union, no strike policy in export processing zones.
- Globalization policies of liberalization, deregulation and privatization that result in the closure of businesses and layoff of workers and employees.

And they must also support:

- Labor's demand for a substantial wage hike, particularly the P125 across-the-board wage hike bill pending in Congress. Connected to this are the demands for the abolishment of the regional wage boards and the reestablishment of a single minimum wage for the entire country.
- The campaign demanding that all cases filed against workers, union leaders and unions in the various fiscal offices, courts and labor commissions all over the country be dismissed. These cases include those filed by Estrada cronies like Emilio Yap, Eduardo Cojuangco, Lucio Tan, William Gatchalian and the Lopez clan.

The vote of organized labor will be denied candidates running under the banner of the Puwersa ng Masang Pilipino (PMP). These candidates must be forewarned—they're already blacklisted in workers and militant urban poor communities. The people might accept the bribes and the groceries, but this is no guarantee that they will give their votes in exchange or in gratitude.

Finally, fighting against the pro-Estrada senators does not mean necessarily or automatically supporting or endorsing the candidates from other political parties. Our support will be on a case to case, individual basis, depending on the stand of each candidate on the People's Agenda and on labor's demands. We will not hesitate to expose or campaign against any candidate belonging to the so-called People Power Coalition if and when they go against the interest of labor.—**CRISPIN BELTRAN, chair, Kilusang Mayo Uno, Ground Floor, Balai Obrero, 63 Narra St., Barangay Claro, Project 3, Quezon City**

~ KAMPANYA ~

The gargantuan problem after People Power II is our Government's budget deficit which may reach P200 Billion this year.

It is alarming to note that our government is borrowing P4 Billion weekly from the market by issuing treasury bills and another P3 Billion through treasury bonds with varying long-term maturity.

One solution that the citizenry can do is to contribute some amount on top of the 'Income Tax Return' tax due this year for the year 2000 ITR.

Upon my request the BIR Statistics Division headed by Ms. Cynthia Santos gave the following data:

Year 1999 #1702 Filers - 89,289 Corporations - P38.469 Billion tax paid
Year 1999 # 1701 Filers - 392,967 Individuals - P 3.838 Billion tax paid

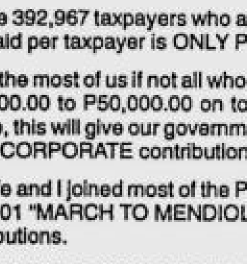
For the 392,967 taxpayers who are self-employed/professionals the average ITR paid per taxpayer is ONLY P9,766.00 (LANG? NAKAKAHIYA ATA.)

I wish the most of us if not all who fall under the above category will contribute P10,000.00 to P50,000.00 on top of our year 2000 'ITR' tax due this year. Hence, this will give our government P4 to P20 billion extra money in addition to the CORPORATE contributions of P20 to P50 billion.

My wife and I joined most of the People Power II rallies as well as the January 20, 2001 "MARCH TO MENDIOLA"—however I deem these are not enough contributions.

MABUHAY! ITO AY KAMPANYA PARA SA BAYAN NATIN.

Engr. ROBERT P. GUZMAN
Tuguegarao City
CARE - (Cagayanos Advocacy for Reforms & Efficiency) - Founding Member



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Quintos murders not a political crime

MY wife and I were five minutes away from where our sons were killed. The assassins couldn't get to me, so they murdered my two innocent sons who were unarmed and had no bodyguards. Is that how political beliefs are pursued? Is that how the New People's Army exacts "revolutionary justice"?

So far the only thing political about the murder case of our sons is the involvement of a politician accused of masterminding the killings but who is now out on bail.

The Quezon City jail detainees—Manolito Matricio, Marion Tobias, Eddie Hermoso, Joshua Ungsod, Gelito Bautista and Ruben Balaguer—are co-accused in the murders of Paul and Michael and are presently held without bail because witnesses have positively identified them. We have nothing to gain in jailing the innocent. That would not bring Paul and Michael back to life and neither will a death sentence for those found guilty of their murder.

We seek justice only because there are others who are to be protected from those who have lost their regard for the sanctity of life and respect for basic human rights.

Those accused in the murders of my sons have the benefit of a court trial to prove their innocence. They continue to enjoy all the rights under the highest law of the land, the very same Constitution that guarantees every person's right to life and liberty that ceased to exist when Paul and Michael were killed.—**REP. RICARDO V. QUINTOS, Occidental Mindoro**

E-Pass lanes are working

WE hope the following clarifications will address the four concerns raised by Carlito S. Villanueva regarding the e-Pass in his letter published last Feb. 21.

So far, we have issued about 30,000 e-Pass tags, which means that we now have a good number of motorists passing the dedicated e-Pass lanes. It has been observed that during peak traffic hours in the morning and at night, more vehicles line toward the e-Pass only lanes than the regular (or mixed mode) lanes. But because the E-Pass only lanes process more vehicles at a much faster pace, it looks like the regular lanes are congested.

The Philippine National Construction Corp. (PNCC), operator of the Alabang-Calamba section of the Luzon Expressway (SLEX), and the PNCC Skyway Corp. (PSC), the operator of the Skyway System, are strictly enforcing the rule on the e-Pass only lanes. Under the Land Transportation Office regulation of "Disregarding Traffic Sign" or "Disregarding Traffic Officer," motorists without e-Pass tags who use the e-Pass only lanes are apprehended and issued the traffic ticket and not just scolded.

We agree with Villanueva's proposed solution of equipping all lanes with e-Pass tags to guarantee that the "traffic congestion at all exit points on the expressway will disappear overnight." It is in fact our goal to transform the Skyway System and SLEX into an e-Pass zone where about 85 percent of the expressway traffic use e-Pass and the none e-Pass motorists ("passersby") are provided with only one cash lane.

To achieve this, we are exploring all possibilities to make the price of the e-Pass tag affordable through sponsorship and promotional programs. As a starter, the PSC has waived the annual renewal fee for the e-Pass tag. Pertinent announcements will be made shortly.

The management of the Citra Metro Manila Tollways Corp., PNCC and PSC would like to appeal to their motoring patrons for patience and understanding. Rest assured that they are doing their best to provide a high level of service in the expressway.—**OLIVE F. MARTINEZ, marketing manager, Citra Metro Manila Tollways Corp., 23rd Floor, One Magnificent Mile-Citra Bldg., San Miguel Avenue, Ortigas Center, Pasig City**

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Writers of letters to the editor are requested to include their complete address and telephone or pager number or e-mail address for verification purposes. The Inquirer will not publish any letter unless such information is supplied.

The WORLD
MARGOT J. BATERINA, Editor

Witnesses recount Indon massacre

PARENGGEAN, Indonesia—The massacre took one hour. Six people were beheaded and 112 hacked to death with machetes, spears and knives after being forced into trucks and herded onto a soccer field—despite an earlier police escort and guarantees of protection.

In horrifying accounts Tuesday, survivors told how the victims, including 20 children, were lured from their jungle hideout by government promises of safe passage—only to be slain by Dayak fighters as part of a terror campaign to drive minorities out of parts of Indonesia's share of Borneo Island.

"As they got down from the trucks they were killed right away," said Marjo, a resident of Parenggean village who witnessed the killings on Sunday night. "Chop chop! There was no way they could run. They fell suddenly as they were chopped."

Ten days of ethnic violence in Borneo's Central Kalimantan province has killed at least 428 people, mostly Madurese migrants.

The bloodshed has underscored Indonesia's failure to control ethnic and separatist violence as it struggles to form a working democracy after decades of dictatorial rule under former President Suharto.

Over the past 40 years, more than 100,000 Madurese have resettled in Kalimantan from their island of Madura. Relations soured when the Dayaks, one of Borneo's indigenous ethnic groups, complained of job discrimination. The first major clash occurred in 1997 in West Kalimantan province, when about 3,000 people were killed.

After fleeing violence in the town of Parenggean Wednesday, about 2,000 Madurese migrants hid in the dense jungle surrounding their village for four days while local Dayak gangs hunted for them. Most had no food, water or shelter.

Marhona, a 35-year-old woman staying at a squalid refugee camp in the nearby town of Sampit after escaping the killings in Parenggean said the Dayaks caught many refugees in the jungle and beheaded them.

Local government officials secured an agreement with the Dayaks not to harm the Parenggean refugees, who had already spent three days in the forest, and allow them to evacuate peacefully, said Parenggean's local government head Rukmana Priyatna, a Dayak.

The authorities broadcast the agreement over loud speakers mounted on top of cars and encouraged the refugees to gather at a local government office, guarded by six policemen, he said.

Believing the authorities' promise to protect them, about 390 emerged from the jungle.

But a few hours later about 60 Dayaks armed with homemade weapons arrived and started to terrorize the refugees at the government office. Priyatna said they sliced a woman's head off and kicked it down the street. They also murdered her baby.

The outnumbered police fled the government office without firing a shot.

The Dayaks then herded 118 of the refugees onto trucks and drove them down the road to a nearby soccer field. They forced the refugees to get down from the vehicles and killed them on the spot, Priyatna said.

"The first thing that struck me when I reached the football field was the murder of the babies, the old people and the women," Priyatna said. "They were all piled up together."

He said six of the victims were beheaded. Others had their limbs chopped off and their stomachs slashed open. Before Dutch colonialists outlawed the practice in the late 19th century, the Dayaks had a well-deserved reputation for being headhunters.

The day after the soccer field massacre, the bodies were loaded onto a truck by local residents and driven two kilometers out of town. They were dumped into a mass grave in the middle of a field of tall grass and burnt trees.

Fresh tread marks from an earth mover and a faint smell of decomposing bodies were the only evidence of the day-old burial.

Parenggean, about 110 km west of the provincial capital Palangkaraya, is an isolated town of about 25,000 people who make a living logging the surrounding tropical rain forest. Most residents live in simple wooden houses. There had been about 2,000 Madurese in the town before the violence. Now there are none.

A police spokesperson in Jakarta, Col. Timbul Sianturi, confirmed the killings but defended the officers' lack of intervention, saying they were outnumbered by the Dayaks.

Despite the confirmed death toll of 428, aid workers say several hundred more people may have been killed, with many corpses rotting in houses and fields. *AP*

2 MADURESE children make their way through a refugee camp as they wait to be evacuated. AP

Death of thousands in Feb. 28 Incident remembered

TAIPEI—Soldiers broke down the door of Margaret Kuo's childhood home, grabbed her father and blindfolded him with his necktie before they executed him and dumped his body in a pit 54 years ago in Taiwan.

"He was just 32 years old," said Kuo, a physician from Oakbrook Terrace, Illinois, who yesterday joined millions of others marking one of Taiwan's greatest tragedies: the bloody military crackdown called the Feb. 28 Incident.

For decades, Taiwanese were not allowed to talk about the 1947 massacre of thousands of intellectuals, activists and others the Nationalist Party government deemed threatening. But as the island became more democratic after martial law ended in 1987, the victims' families have become more vocal about the killings. Feb. 28 is now a public holiday.

Holding white lilies, hundreds of people gathered yesterday at a Taipei park that was recently renamed the "Feb. 28 Park" in honor of those killed. The crowd included many like Kuo who returned from abroad to mourn the deaths of their family members.

Kuo said her father was a Japanese-trained surgeon and hospital director, and the authorities never said why they executed him.

The killings came during a tense time in Taiwanese history. The China-based Nationalist government had just taken over Taiwan from Japan, which ruled the island as a colony for five decades until World War II ended.

The poorly trained, undisciplined Nationalist troops who replaced the Japanese were suspicious and contemptuous of the Taiwanese, who seemed too sympathetic to Japan. The Taiwanese were becoming fed up with the corrupt Nationalist Army and government.

The situation exploded when officials on Feb. 28, 1947, beat up an elderly woman illegally peddling cigarettes in Taipei. Crowds began rioting and demanding reform across the island, and additional troops were sent to the island.

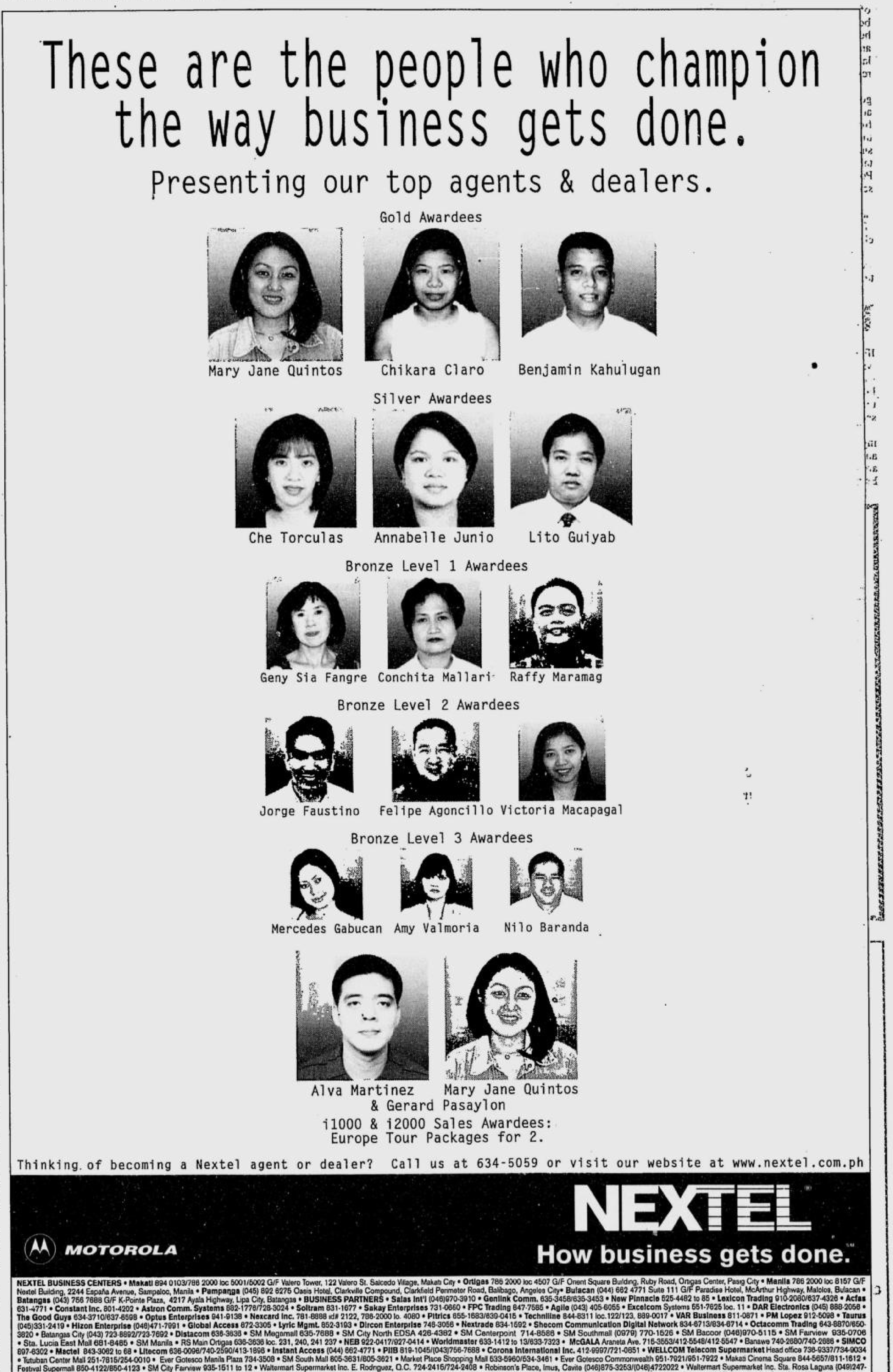
In the following months, the soldiers began arresting and killing people they claimed were communists or saboteurs trying to overthrow the government. The list of targets included lawyers, doctors and others considered to be Taiwan's best and brightest. There is no official death count, but some historians say tens of thousands were killed.

The chances of obtaining the documents has become greater with the election of President Chen Shui-bian, whose Democratic Progressive Party has long pushed for greater access to government records.

This week, Chen urged the government's archivists to open up the long-sealed records to the public, and yesterday a small collection of Feb. 28 Incident documents was put on display.

Speaking yesterday to victims' families, the president said the Feb. 28 Incident was a great scar that the Taiwanese still need to work hard to heal.

"We must look forward but that doesn't mean we can't also look back," Chen said. "And it certainly doesn't mean that we have to forget." *AP*



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Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 0442 Series of 2001.

Bush sells $1.6-trillion tax cut plan

WASHINGTON—President George W. Bush is setting out to sell his plans for tax cuts, debt repayment and restrained federal spending while Congress begins dissecting them in a debate likely to last for months.

"The growing surplus exists because taxes are too high and government is charging more than it needs," the new president said Tuesday night in a nationally televised address—his first before Congress.

"The people have been overcharged and on their behalf, I am here asking for a refund."

He drew cheers for that, and across-the-board praise from Republicans afterward. Democrats swiftly signaled their determination to resist a cut of $1.6 trillion over 10 years, arguing it threatens Social Security retirement benefits, the Medicare health insurance plan for the elderly, and other important programs.

"President Bush's budget numbers simply don't add up. Ours do," House Democratic leader Dick Gephardt said. "His plan leaves no money for anything except tax cuts. Ours does."

His speech behind him, the president was setting out for Pennsylvania, first stop on a five-state swing designed to build public support for his budget and bring pressure on Democratic lawmakers whose votes could be pivotal.

After Pennsylvania, the presidential itinerary ran to Nebraska, Iowa, Arkansas and Georgia—all states with moderate and conservative Democrats whose votes Bush hopes to gain in the House and Senate.

"I feel the pressure to do the right thing," first-term Sen. Ben Nelson, a Nebraska Democrat, said several hours before the president spoke. "I don't feel presidential pressure. I'm not weak-kneed. I'll stand the test."

Democrats have yet to agree on the details of a tax cut alternative, and Bush used his nationally televised speech to make the case for across-the-board reductions, reducing the so-called marriage penalty, doubling the child credit and—the most controversial portion—phasing out the estate tax.

"We must act quickly" to cut taxes, the president said Tuesday night, and Republicans were eager to comply. Officials said the House Ways and Means Committee would meet Thursday to approve the centerpiece of Bush's plan, income tax rate reductions. A vote in the full House would follow next week, but the bill is unlikely to come up for a Senate vote before mid- to late-spring.

Tax cuts aside, Bush said his budget would retire $2 trillion of the publicly held federal debt over the next decade—the maximum that can prudently be retired, he said. He said his budget would keep the Social Security surplus off-limits to regular government spending, and dedicate all Medicare payroll tax receipts to the Medicare program.

He also proposed curtailing a recent run-up in federal spending, calling for an overall increase of 4 percent, down from the 6 percent of the past few years. Without cutting back, he said the nation "will spend the surplus and have to dip into Social Security to pay other bills." *AP*

World's poorest seen to triple in 50 years

UNITED NATIONS—Over the next 50 years, the world's poorest nations will triple in size—while its richest will shrink, a new UN study predicts.

The world, 6.1 billion people strong today, is anticipated to reach 9.3 billion by 2050, the UN Population Division estimated in a report issued yesterday. Nine of every 10 people will be living in a developing country, one of six in India alone.

Meanwhile, Europe and Japan will see their populations plummet, forcing them to rethink immigration policies and adjust social services to accommodate a shrinking work force and a growing elderly population, said Joseph Chamie, director of the UN Population Division.

"Some people think the world population problem is over," he said. "No. This is a long-term issue and it's a very complex symphony—you have some countries declining, you have other countries growing rapidly, and you have some staying the same. When you add those up, you have a very complex world."

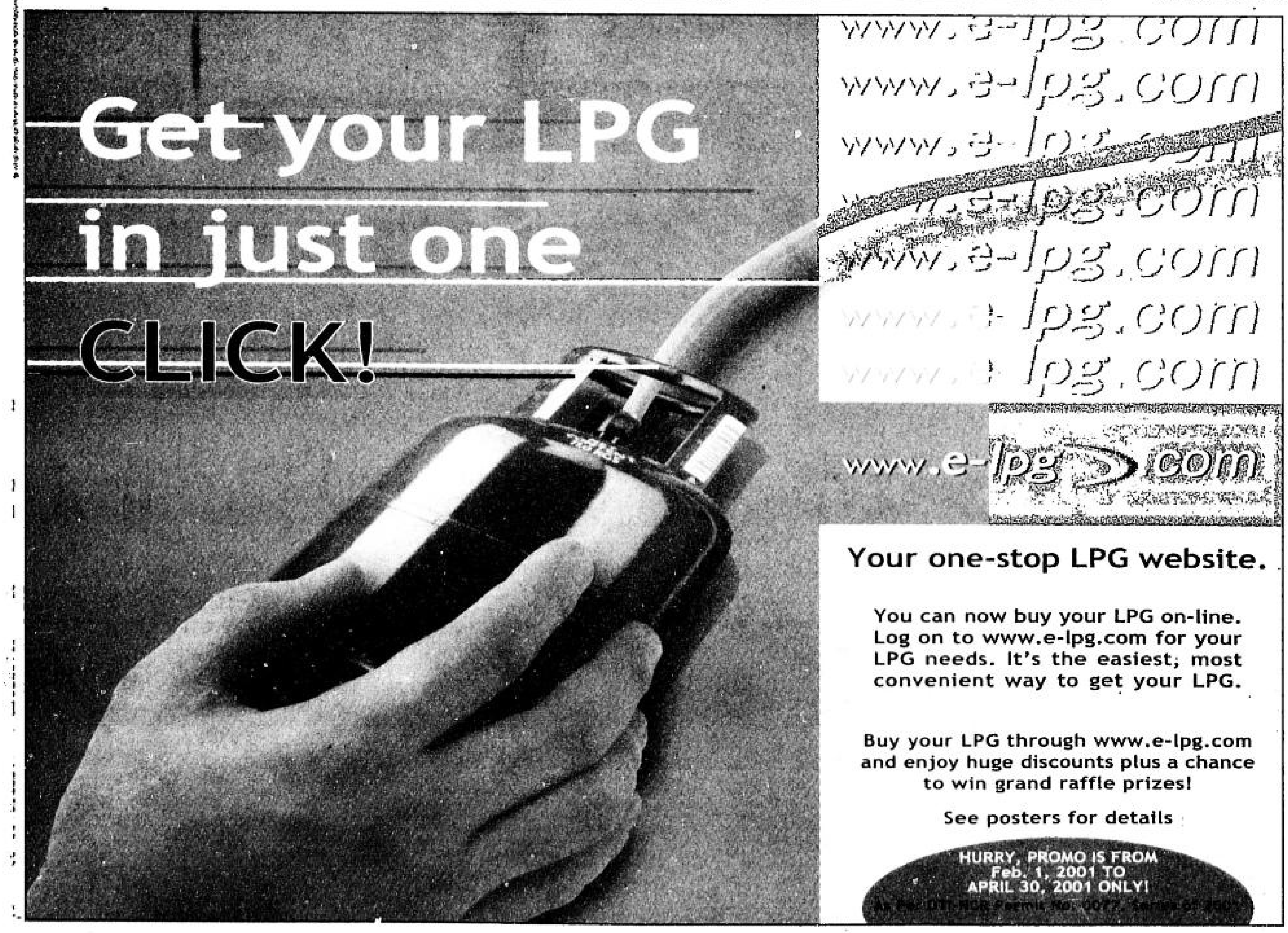
"Virtually all of this growth is in the developing world—and a good part of it is in the poorest countries," he added.

The projections are a hint of what Chamie calls an upcoming "new order"—a world that is larger, older and poorer, and one that will depend heavily on migration.

Growth will be phenomenal in Africa, much of Asia and Latin America, the study projected. The United States, with a fresh influx of 1 million immigrants a year, will grow—to nearly 400 million at mid-century from 283 million today, it said.

Europe, in contrast, will start seeing a decline as early as 2003 without migration. Ukraine's population is projected to drop nearly by 40 percent by 2050, and Russia and Italy's more than a quarter.

Last year, the 15 European Union nations together recorded a natural population growth—births minus deaths—of 343,000. It took India just a week to match that. Already burdened by a population of 1 billion, India is anticipated to have 600 million more people by 2050. *AP*



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As Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 0077, Series of 2001

Saint for gun owners pushed

VATICAN CITY—Admirers of a sharpshooting seminarian who became a saint are lobbying the Vatican to make their man the patron saint of handgun owners.

In a ceremony Tuesday, John Michael Snyder, a gun fancier and ex-Jesuit seminarian who once worked for the National Rifle Association, awarded medals to men who, like himself, think St. Gabriel of the Sorrowful Mother deserves such special Vatican recognition. The event was held at a hotel just down the street from St. Peter's Basilica.

Born Francis Possenti in 1838 in Assisi, the hometown of another, more famous, holy man, the saint is also known as Gabriel Possenti. Along with another saint known for valor, Joan of Arc, he is one of three saints made during the early 20th century papacy of Benedict XV.

"It is obvious that St. Gabriel Possenti is very much a saint for the 21st century," Snyder said of the man whose sharpshooting skills scared away marauders from the Italian village of Isola del Gran Sasso one day in 1860.

According to accounts, Possenti confronted some renegade soldiers who were about to rape a village woman. At that moment, a lizard darted by, and Possenti shot it dead in a display of marksmanship that impressed the bad guys so much they fled.

Speaking on the saint's feast day, Snyder said making Possenti the patron of handgun owners would show that the Vatican is "courageous enough to stick its neck out for the right of individuals to defend themselves against evil and tyranny."

The Vatican has approved of many saints as patrons of various occupations or groups, from maids to chefs, from hunters to funeral directors. But Snyder, who heads the Arlington, Virginia-based St. Gabriel Possenti Society Inc., might not have a quick answer to his prayers.

The Vatican press office on Monday said it has noted in the past that naming a patron for gun lobbyists isn't opportune.

Snyder, who said the Vatican told him a few years ago that he needed to enlist bishops around the world for his cause, said he would not be discouraged. *AP*

Foot-and-mouth disease cripples UK countryside

LONDON—With no end in sight to an escalating outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease, Britain yesterday awoke to headlines proclaiming "panic" and "chaos" in a countryside crippled by the livestock virus.

Cases of the highly contagious disease have climbed from seven to 12 to 18 since the weekend, and veterinary officials told an emergency Cabinet meeting Tuesday that more were expected in the coming days.

"It is likely there will be more cases in animals already incubating the disease, but we hope however that the controls that have been put in place will prevent the further spread of the disease," Prime Minister Tony Blair said in a statement posted on the government's website.

Britain extended a ban on livestock movements for two more weeks Tuesday, and the European Union lengthened its ban on British exports of live animals, meat and dairy products.

Authorities also closed public footpaths and canceled horse races and various sporting events, adding to a laundry list of precautions that aim to minimize the possibility of humans carrying the virus.

Even some roads were closed due to smoke billowing from pyres of slaughtered animals.

The Daily Telegraph summed up developments Wednesday with a somber headline: "The day they closed the countryside."

The Guardian's front page declared, "Spread of virus brings new chaos;" and The Independent headlined, "New cases, new closures, new panic."

Foot-and-mouth disease, which afflicts cloven-hoofed animals such as sheep, cows and pigs, is extremely easy to spread. Although humans almost never catch the disease, they can carry it on boots and clothing. The virus can also be airborne, transmitted from one animal to another, or contracted through contaminated feed.

The effects of the outbreak are beginning to seep into urban areas. London supermarkets have posted warnings that stocks of beef and lamb are likely to run out in the coming days.

Hoping to avoid major shortages, the government is working on a scheme that will allow farmers to move healthy animals to slaughterhouses and on to markets only with strictly enforced precautions to prevent them from spreading the infection.

It also plans to draw $228 million from an EU agriculture fund to compensate beef, dairy and sheep farmers who may be unable export their products for up to six months after Britain is declared free of the disease.

About 7,000 cattle, pigs and sheep have been slaughtered in Britain as authorities work to avoid a repeat of a 1967 foot-and-mouth epidemic, when half a million animals were culled.

An additional 5,000 livestock have been killed in continental Europe, where no cases have been found but authorities fear the disease could spread.

France on Tuesday announced it would destroy 20,000 sheep imported from Britain since the beginning of the month. *AP*

Anxiety, depression grip farmers

CORRINGHAM, England—Standing beside a heap of disinfectant-soaked straw blocking the winding lane that leads to his farm, Ian Frood says he feels he's aged 10 years in the past week.

"This virus is unforgiving," said the 53-year-old farmer, whose land lies in the flat green countryside of Essex, only a few kilometers from the epicenter of Britain's outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease. "If it comes, it comes. There's really nothing you can do to stop it."

In the second week of what is fast becoming a wildfire epidemic of the highly contagious livestock ailment, Britain's farmers live in daily dread of finding that the infection has hit their herds. If that happens, it is a death sentence for the animals—and sometimes, for a farmer's hopes of staying on the land.

"So many of my colleagues have said to me, 'If it gets my herd, that's it. I just don't have it in me to start all over again,'" said Frood, whose father and grandfather were farmers before him. "You just feel so helpless."

The disease, first discovered among pigs at an Essex slaughterhouse on Feb. 19, has been found at nearly a score of separate sites, pointing to an ever-expanding web of infection.

Authorities are struggling to contain it, but the virus is so potent, and so easily spread, that it almost seems to be leapfrogging around Britain at will.

It can be carried on the wind, or on a trouser cuff. It can turn up in contaminated feed, or be carried by animals that can't catch it—horses, dogs, badgers. It hitches rides on cars and farm machinery. Once one animal in a herd gets it, others will swiftly sicken as well.

Increasingly desperate to stem the spread of contagion, officials have closed country footpaths, halted horse racing, quarantined suspect farms and slaughterhouses, and shut down many parks and nature reserves.

Frood, like virtually every livestock farmer in Britain, is taking measures to try to protect his herds, 300 cattle and 350 sheep. *AP*

Talk show shocks Arabs

CAIRO, Egypt—Only seconds before going live, the director was screaming his final instructions to the excited studio audience.

"Can we settle down please? This is the world's most popular Arabic talk show and I expect you to conduct yourselves accordingly."

Then: "Hala Sarhan is the host and I hope you'll give her a fitting welcome."

The 200 men, women and children in the studio on the outskirts of Cairo broke into warm applause as Sarhan made her grand entry with an ear-to-ear smile and a loving look at the appreciative crowd.

"What a beautiful audience we have here tonight," she says.

And so begins another "Yahala"—"Hello"—perhaps the Arab world's most-watched talk show and certainly the most controversial.

"Yahala"—a pun on Sarhan's first name—was the Arab world's first American-style talk show when it started nearly 10 years ago. The novelty of interactive television soon turned into shock when the program began to deal with topics that are taboo among Arabs, like sex, and to tackle politically sensitive subjects like Arab-American relations.

"I think I am the first Arab woman to utter the word 'sex' on television," says Sarhan, a US-educated Egyptian.

Sarhan is often accused of sensationalism, arrogance, irreverence, even pornography.

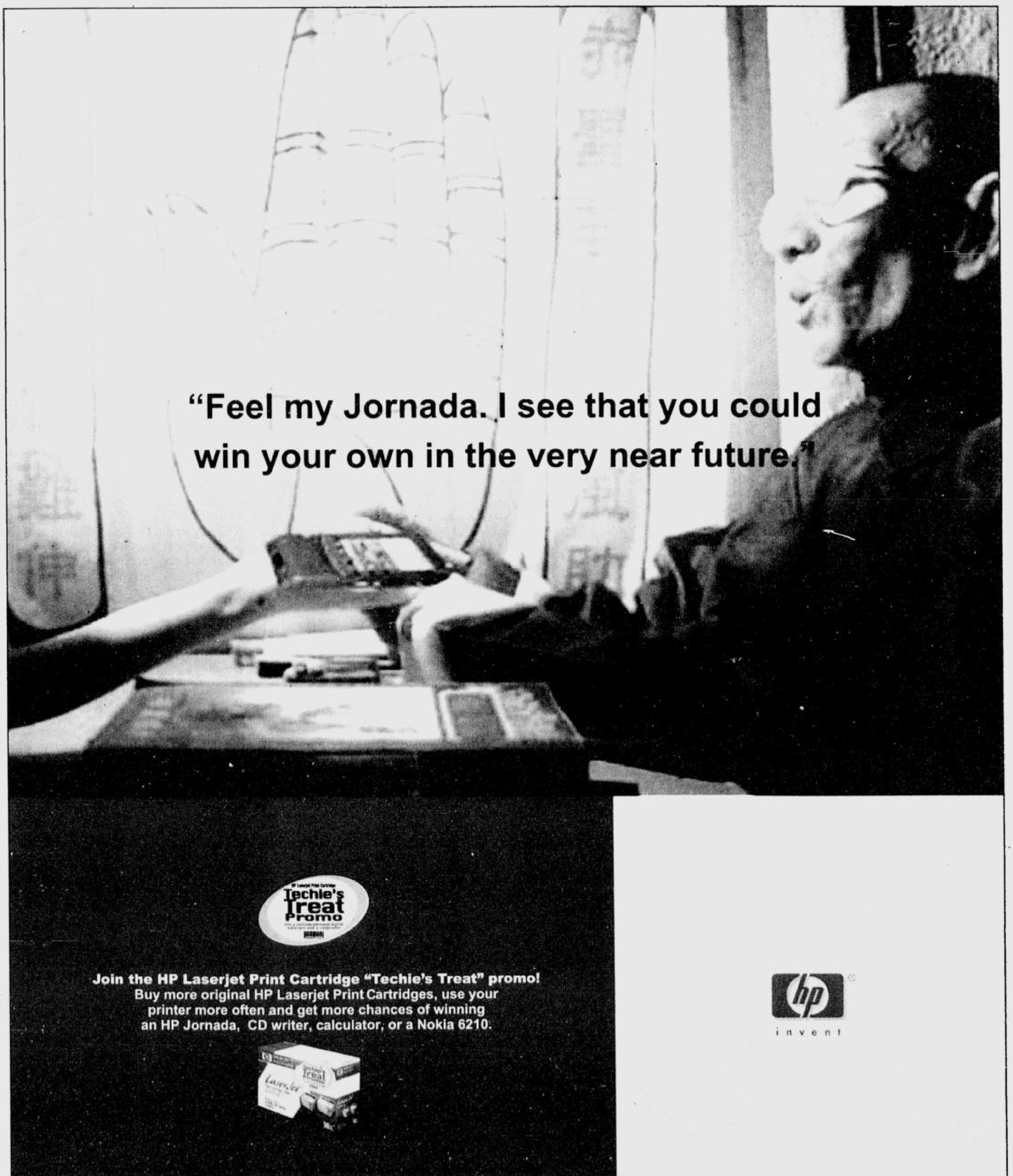
"If they criticize me, then they are watching my program," she counters.

Mohammed Hassan, a former "Yahala" executive, believes the program merely provides balance for the "reactionary and (Muslim) fundamentalist" material also aired on the satellite network Arab Radio and Television that broadcasts "Yahala" to some 10 million viewers as far afield as Australia, Canada and South America.

"The success of 'Yahala' is largely due to an excellent team of researchers and (Sarhan's) own charisma," Hassan said.

One fan, Cairo homemaker Ibtisam Ahmed, finds Sarhan "professional . . . she doesn't do what other talk show hosts do, which is interrupting guests all the time."

In a "Yahala" program titled "Our Mother America," Sarhan spoke of the United States as "the dream and the nightmare, the judge and the executioner" before one of her guests called on Arabs to fight Americans in a jihad, or holy struggle. *AP*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4. Mail entries to **"Techie's Treat"** promo c/o any of the ff : (for Luzon/GMA) Publicis Dialog, Transcend Cargo Express, 2739 Gen. Capinpin St .Bangkal, Makati; (for Visayas/Mindanao) Publicis-Dialog, Cebu Branch Office: Door 18 Wag-wag Compound, Pusok, Simento, Cebu City.

All entries will be kept at Publicis-Dialog warehouse. A total of two (2) raffle draws will be held at a designated venue at 4 pm, one draw per area grouping.

RAFFLE DRAWS DATES / PRIZES

Deadline of submission of entries	Raffle Draw Dates	Area Grouping	Raffle Draw Venue	Prizes at stake
March 11 (4pm)	March 17	Visayas/ Mindanao	Publicis-Dialog Office: Door 18, Wag-wag Compound Pusok, Simento Cebu City	30 winners of HP calculators 3 winners of Nokia 6210 3 winners of HP CD writers 2 winners of HP Jornadas
March 25 (4pm)	March 31	Luzon/ GMA	HP Head Office: 9/F Rufino Pacific Tower 6784 Ayala Ave. 1229 Makati City	70 winners of HP calculators 7 winners of Nokia 6210 7 winners of HP CD writers 3 winners of HP Jornadas

Hewlett-Packard (HP) will pay for the 20% tax on prizes exceeding Php10,000.00. All prizes are not convertible to cash. Winners can only win once. Winners drawn more than once will automatically win the prize with the highest cash value. Winners will be notified via press releases, registered mail and telephone. Non-winning entries in the first draw will no longer be included in the second draw. To claim the prize, winners must present at least one (1) valid ID (e.g. driver's license, company ID, valid passport) and the registered mail notification. Prizes may be claimed at: (for Luzon/GMA) HP Head office, 9/F Rufino Pacific Tower 6784 Ayala Ave., 1229 Makati City, Philippines from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm, Mondays to Fridays only. Look for Jun Juntilla or Betty Bontigao; (for Visayas/Mindanao) nearest Publicis-Dialog Office specified in the registered mail notification. Prizes not claimed within sixty (60) days from receipt of notification shall be forfeited in favor of the HEWLETT-PACKARD Philippines Corp. (HP) with prior approval from DTI. All employees of the Hewlett-Packard Philippines, distributors, dealers, resellers, its advertising and promotions agencies and their relatives up to the second degree of consanguinity or affinity are not qualified to join.

Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 0223 Series of 2001

Across the NATION

TONY BERGONIA, Assistant Editor

ROUNDUP

Bandit shot dead

DIGOS CITY—A militiaman shot dead a bandit long wanted for a series of cattle rustling activities in Kiblawan town on Feb. 23. But the firearm used by militiaman Romulo Ramos was seized by the companion of bandit Ricky Angeles after Ramos run out of bullets during the encounter in Sitio Datalngabong, Barangay Kimlawis.

Allan A. Nawal, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Kidnap victim escapes

DIGOS CITY—A man escaped from his abductors a day after he was snatched at the Maaya Beach Resort here. The victim's female companion, who is unidentified, is still being held by the abductors. Racleto Taping, a vulcanizer from Banate, Malungon, Sarangani, jumped off the tricycle used by his captors in Barangay Guihing-Aplaya in Hagonoy town on Feb. 24. He was wounded when the abductors fired at him. The kidnappers reportedly demanded P3 million as ransom.

Allan A. Nawal, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Human smuggling denied

LUCENA CITY—Senior Supt. Charlemagne Alejandrino, Quezon police director, has denied reports of human smuggling activities in Hondagua, Lopez, Quezon, last week. According to the reports, an unidentified foreign vessel, believed to be involved in human smuggling together with some unscrupulous local officials, was sighted at Hondagua Bay. Sketchy reports received by the provincial police said most of the passengers were mostly Chinese who disembarked at midnight.

Arnel Avila, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

43 gamblers nabbed

CALAPAN CITY—Six people from Batangas and five others from Quezon were among the 43 persons arrested by the Oriental Mindoro police for alleged involvement in "jueteng" and other illegal numbers games. Police charged 32 others with violation of anti-gambling laws after they were caught drawing the winning combinations of jueteng in separate raids in Baco, Pola, Calapan and Bongabong on Feb. 19-22. Supt. Romeo Ricardo, provincial police chief, said the suspects identified their financiers as a certain Enriquez and Umali.

Joel J. Jabal, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Mayor survives ambush

LEGAZPI CITY—A former leader of the Reform the Armed Forces Movement and now mayor of Bacon town in Sorsogon escaped an ambush attempt last week. Mayor Leovic Dioneda, a graduate of the Philippine Military Academy who joined the Philippine Constabulary, was in Sitio Sta. Teresita, Barangay Bato, 9 km from the town proper when he was waylaid by suspected communist rebels, a report reaching Camp Simeon Ola here said. At least eight young-looking men staged the ambush, the report added.

Job Belen, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Woman's body found in car

SAN NICOLAS, Ilocos Norte—A woman's body bearing 15 stab wounds was found inside a car parked within a church compound here last week. Police identified the body as that Jennifer Reimegrado, [illegible] a medical representative from Sta. Catalina town. Police are looking into robbery as the motive of the killing.

Kira Espino, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

Drug suspect arrested

BALAGTAS, Bulacan—Police arrested a man here for possession of more than 200 grams of illegal drugs on Friday. Seized from Christian Pua, 24, during a buy-bust operation was P250,000 worth of shabu (methamphetamine hydrochloride). Pua is in the police watch list following complaints that he has been allegedly supplying illegal drugs in this town.

Carmela Reyes, PDI Central Luzon Desk

Paper puppets face 'trapos'

By Vincent Cabreza, Ma. Diosa Labiste and Jowel F. Canuday

PUPPETS greet aspirants for elective posts in front of the Commission on Elections office in Baguio City. VINCENT CABREZA

BAGUIO CITY—Thirty kilos of pulped INQUIRER editions that were used to fashion six anti-"*trapo*" (traditional politicians) puppets greeted Baguio and Cordillera politicians on Wednesday as they filed their candidacies at the Commission on Elections office here.

The puppets, shaped as Igorot warriors with gongs and noise sticks, walked through the Comelec compound at 9:30 a.m., catching the politicians and Comelec officials by surprise.

They bore small placards bearing stinging tirades against *trapos*, among them: "*Bawal ang balimbing!* (Turncoats are banned)" and "*Eleksyon para sa pagbabago, hindi pangtrapo* (Elections for Change, not for traditional politicians)."

Dramatist Edgardo Espiritu, who also led street performances in the city at the height of anti-Estrada protests last year, cast the puppets.

Each puppet was molded from INQUIRER issues, partly as a statement because of the newspaper's exposés on disgraced President Joseph Estrada's links to organized crime and his ostentatious lifestyle, Espiritu said.

"I wanted to show off the articles. It was so convenient for politicians to ride along the Edsa bandwagon, right? Did they do anything against Erap? Were they in the news when Erap was still president?," he asked in Filipino.

"But I always use the INQUIRER for my masks because the quality of its paper is good, and it dries well."

The puppets were manipulated on strings by six masked members of the drama troupe "Tropang Paltok." They constantly "danced" on broad, highly defined flat feet whenever a politician arrived to file his candidacy.

Councilor Leandro Yangot, in a g-string, tried to join the puppets but was immediately dissuaded by his advisers.

Yangot, who is running for vice mayor, had joined an opposition coalition led by former Baguio Rep. Honorato Aquino.

Baguio Rep. Be[illegible]do [illegible]gara who [illegible] and Mayor [illegible]ricio Domogan who is running for a [illegible]ressional seat [illegible] straight faces as [illegible]

Sin[illegible]

[illegible] he two official [illegible] llenged [illegible] s Sur Gov. Lu[illegible] eson's [illegible] nt influence [illegible] Power Coal [illegible] house bra[illegible]

Sing[illegible] had [illegible] the congressional nominee of his counsel during the Estrada impeachment trial, Pablito Sanidad, former national chair of the Free Legal Assistance Group.

But Vergara and Domogan arrived at the Comelec office on Wednesday bearing an official Lakas-NUCD nomination.

Sanidad, who filed his candidacy for Baguio congressman on Wednesday afternoon, was not confronted by the puppets.

Espiritu stressed that his anti-*trapo* puppet show did not intend to make any exception.

"I was not casting aspersions against any specific politician at the Comelec office, because I do not really vote. But let the message hit who has to be hit," he said.

Stealing the show

In Iloilo City, amid the rush to beat the deadline to file the certificates of candidacy, the party-list group Bayan Muna also made a bid to steal the show from traditional politicians by holding its launching assembly.

Bayan Muna president Satur Ocampo and popular comedienne Cynthia Patag led close to a thousand people in proclaiming the party's brand of alternative politics at the La Paz district plaza.

Among those who attended the assembly were Vice Gov. Demy Sonza, and his running mate Roberto Armada, the official candidates of Lakas-NUCD in Iloilo.

Sonza and Armada said they were proud to be the first elected local officials to renounce Estrada last year after he was implicated in the "Juetengate" scandal.

They pledged to carry Bayan Muna in ballots as their choice of party list.

Ireneo Aaron Jr., one of the four candidates for city councilors endorsed by Bayan Muna, also vowed support to campaign among jeepney owners and drivers who have urged him to run for a seat in the city council.

Siegfred Deduro, the party list's vice president for the Visayas, said groups in Panay promised to deliver some 50,000 votes from farmers, fisherfolk, slum dwellers, students and professionals.

Bayan Muna needs 1.2 million votes to grab the full three seats at the House of Representatives.

Deduro said the militant groups are not new to electoral politics because they have supported many local candidates that won the elections.

"After winning, many politicians, however, forgot their covenants to us. Only a genuine people party could institute reforms," he said.

The daylong program had all the elements of traditional politics—singing, dancing and tirades—but it also tackled serious issues, which many politicians would rather not do on stage.

Bayan Muna supporters said they would continue to espouse issues like housing for the city's growing squatter communities, declaring Iloilo a mining-free area, more subsidies for farmers' products, scrapping the Power Purchase Agreement which raises electrical bills by 67 percent, and recognition of the rights of the Tumandok, the indigenous peoples of Panay.

The Bayan Muna assembly also launched the campaign against pro-Estrada senatorial candidates Ricardo Puno, Panfilo Lacson, Juan Ponce Enrile, Gregorio Honasan, Orlando Mercado, Edgardo Angara, Miriam Defensor-Santiago and Loi Ejercito.

Put together, the initial of their first names spell "PLEHMAS" or phlegm. Bayan Muna said the acronym is just as repugnant as *trapo*, or dishrag, a term for traditional politicians.

Noise barrage

In Davao City, politicians played their gimmicks to the hilt as they beat yesterday's deadline for the filing of candidacies for local elective posts.

Rep. Rodrigo Duterte, a frontrunner in the three-cornered fight for the mayoral seat, had a nun, Sr. Josephine Bacaltos, file his candidacy at the Comelec office.

Duterte did not show up during the filing of his certificate of candidacy around 8:15 a.m. but about a hundred of his supporters did.

His partymate, Wendel Avisado, who is running in his place as representative of the first congressional district, also brought about 200 supporters.

Avisado's supporters held a 15-minute noise barrage outside the Comelec premises.

Duterte and Avisado are running under the Hugpong sa mga Tawong Lungsod party, which is affiliated with the PDP-Laban.

The party fielded a full slate for mayor, vice mayor, the city's three congressional districts and 24 city councilors.

Duterte's estranged wife Elizabeth is also running for councilor as an independent.

Reelectionist Mayor Benjamin de Guzman had a show of force as he marched through the streets with the full slate of his Alyansa Katawhan sa Dabaw party.

The march, which started at the San Pedro Cathedral where they held a noon Mass, was accompanied by a band and about a thousand supporters.

Candidate Abelardo "Billy" Aportadera Jr., for the second congressional district, capitalized on a popular telephone company commercial by distributing book cards and wearing T-shirts with the slogan "Hello, Billy!"

Militant organizations and sectoral groups joined two of the city council candidates of party-list group Bayan Muna in a march from the Rizal Park to the Comelec office.

The group brought torches to symbolize their hope of winning the political contest.

On Monday, business leader Joji Ilagan-Bian, who resigned recently as chair of the Mindanao Business Council (MBC) to run as representative of the second district, held a motorcade after attending Mass at the San Antonio Church at the slum community in the sprawling Agdao District.

Comelec personnel said a number of candidates, including those fielded by national political parties, avoided the media and fanfare.

Subic workers defy return order

SUBIC BAY FREEPORT—Protesting employees here have defied a return-to-work order issued by officials of the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority and its subsidiary, Freeport Services Corp (FSC).

"They have 48 hours from receipt of the order to go back to their posts," Manuel Aurelio, FSC president, said.

On Monday night, as the deadline given for the employees to return to their posts lapsed, the number of workers gathered outside the freeport's main gate swelled to about 500.

Earlier that day, protest leaders submitted, through the SBMA law enforcement department, a letter addressed to SBMA Chair Felicito Payumo and a compilation of the issues raised by each group of employees participating in the mass action, which began Feb. 21.

In their letter, the protest leaders said they were still open to talks with Payumo or his representatives. They also blamed management representatives who earlier met with them for the impasse in negotiations.

"We thought that after we gave them . . . our pleas, we would have a formal negotiation. Instead, they kept telling us that we were just being used by politicians," the employees said in their letter to Payumo.

In the letter, the protest leaders said that from an initial 237 security and ground maintenance personnel, the number of protesters has increased to 800, with workers from other SBMA-FSC departments joining them.

FSC officials said some employees of Olongapo City Hall and supporters of Tourism Secretary Richard Gordon were asking other employees to join the protest. *Elizabeth Marcelo, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

Cops escort Japanese eng'rs

CEBU CITY—A Japanese construction firm yesterday resumed work on the multibillion-peso South Coastal Road (SCR) project here after police provided a 24-hour security detail for its six Japanese engineers.

Supt. Ronald Roderos, Cebu City police chief, said that starting yesterday, the engineers of TOA Construction were given police escorts, who were trained to provide security for very important persons (VIPs).

The escorts will also advise the engineers, their cooks, drivers, employees and aides on proper security measures. Roderos said he even gave them a 13-page pamphlet on "preventive security measures."

"Our top priority is security for Japanese engineers and consultants," he said.

TOA Construction suspended work on the road project on Friday, a day after its three Japanese engineers were ambushed in a subdivision in Barangay Bulacao.

The company feared the safety of its engineers, more so because no suspects had been arrested or identified.

The Japanese Embassy also sought the suspension of work pending resolution of the case.

The P7-billion project covers 4.5 km of coastal road from Barangay Inayawan to the northern tip of Cebu City. It is a major component of the South Reclamation Project undertaken by the city government, which is funded by Japan's Overseas Economic Cooperation Fund.

Japan is the country's single largest aid donor, with the Philippines receiving P36.7 billion in official development assistance last year.

Engineers Harutushi Usui, Hironobu Takeuchi and Yoshinobu Fukushima were on their way home past 8 p.m. on Feb. 22 when three armed men tried to stop them, firing at their blue Isuzu Highlander, just a few meters from their staff house at the St. Jude Acres Subdivision in Bulacao.

The three were not hurt. Their driver, Felix Go Jr., suffered minor cuts from fragments of the broken windshield.

A second vehicle carrying their co-workers—Tashiniko Amano, Kyōta Norizoki and Takayashu Koga—immediately turned back after the firing started.

Police investigators were looking into business rivalry as among the possible motives of the ambush.

In Cotabato City, Public Works Secretary Simeon Datumanong yesterday urged the Philippine National Police and the National Bureau of Investigation to speed up investigation of the attack on the Japanese engineers.

He expressed apprehension that the incident could adversely affect government programs covered by existing agreements involving Japanese development assistance. *Roger V. Paller, PDI Visayas Bureau, with a report from Nash B. Maulana, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Another kidnapping in Bicol

LEGAZPI CITY—Less than a week after police rescued two kidnapped Chinese-Filipino women from Pili, Camarines Sur, a 20-year-old daughter of a wealthy businessman from the same province was seized by armed men on Tuesday night.

A police report identified the victim as Maryann Tan, 20, a student of the Ateneo de Naga University in Naga City and daughter of Valentin Tan, owner of a hardware store and a grocery in Naga.

Tan had just closed the store in Barangay Concepcion Grande around 8 p.m. when the incident occurred, Supt. Eleasar Bron, Naga police chief, said.

Bron said three men took Tan at gunpoint after ordering her driver to alight from her service vehicle and proceed to Albay.

The vehicle was recovered by policemen along the Maharlika Highway near the Camarines Sur police office, 2 kilometers from the place of the abduction.

The victim's family had not yet received any communication from the kidnappers, police said.

Tan is the sixth victim of kidnap gangs in the region this year. On Jan. 29, two sisters and an employee of the Cosay family that owns big businesses in Bicol, were kidnapped by armed men who demanded P40 million in ransom.

Salvacion Cosay Tan was freed after P4.8 million in ransom was reportedly paid.

Rey Nasol, PDI Southern Luzon

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Northern Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao including Palawan will experience cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and isolated thunderstorms. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to at times cloudy with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms.

SOURCE: PAGASA

Metro Manila Hi 32° Lo 23°	**Baguio** Hi 23° Lo 15°	**Tuguegarao** Hi 28° Lo 21°	**Laoag** Hi 34° Lo 24°
Clark Zone Hi 32° Lo 23°	**Tagaytay** Hi 30° Lo 21°	**Legazpi** Hi 30° Lo 25°	**Calapan** Hi 33° Lo 23°
Bacolod Hi 33° Lo 24°	**Roxas** Hi 31° Lo 26°	**Cebu** Hi 29° Lo 25°	**Tacloban** Hi 32° Lo 25°
Gen. Santos Hi 35° Lo 23°	**Zamboanga** Hi 33° Lo 20°	**Cagayan de Oro** Hi 30° Lo 23°	**Davao** Hi 29° Lo 24°

Compiled by: Ray Leyesa, PDI Research

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‘Third force’ behind hostilities seen

COTABATO CITY—A "third force" is involved in a series of hostilities in Maguindanao that were apparently meant to disrupt the May 14 elections, officials said.

Mustapha Tatak, barangay chair of Sapakan, Mamasapano in Maguindanao, said an armed group under Commander Blackie Dagandal of the Moro National Liberation-Front Bakat Force was behind the Feb. 11 attack in his village.

The incident triggered military operations against the Moro Islamic Liberation Front in portions of the Liguasan Marsh in Maguindanao and North Cotabato.

Investigation by local authorities showed that the Mamasapano attackers were followers of Dagandal from Sultan sa Barongis town and MILF guerrillas under a Commander Allan Qatar.

Shariff Aguak Vice Mayor Datu Andal Ampatuan said the "third force" was operating in areas covered by the foreign-funded Kabulnan Irrigation Project in Maguindanao, probably on a mission to sabotage the peace efforts of the government with the MILF.

He said the villagers' experiences during the 1993 armed conflict in North Cotabato's Malmar Irrigation Project showed a pattern of sabotage by a "third force" to create trouble in major government projects in order to gain national attention.

Last month, masked men set off an explosion inside the compound of Sebastian Construction Co. in Shariff Aguak, wounding three construction workers of the P1.7-billion Kabulnan project.

People have also complained of men wearing bonnets who arrive at night in Barangay Pidsandawan.

Tatak said the residents recovered a bloodied baseball cap. He said he was able to identify two of those wounded among the attackers as members of the MNLF-Bakat Force.

Most of the attackers, he said, wore bonnets and were reportedly organized by Dagandal, a councilor of another town.

Tatak, who was also wounded in the Mamasapano incident, identified two of the attackers as Kuli Malang and Guindo Potao. The two are reportedly wanted for multiple murder and robbery in band.

Malang, a brother-in-law of Dagandal's, owned the baseball cap and a pouch that the residents recovered after the early morning clash between the attackers and civilian volunteers, Tatak said.

According to the villagers, Potao is being protected by the MNLF Bakat Force, MILF guerrillas under Qatar, and even several government officials.

Potao is one of the suspects in the killing of six truckers in Buluan, Maguindanao, in August, the villagers said. They had been seen often in Lambayong and Tacurong towns in Sultan Kudarat and even this city, sometimes with police escorts.

Mamasapano Mayor Akmad Ampatuan has called on authorities to arrest the intruders in his town and "unmask" those behind the hostilities.

Army spokesperson Maj. Joselito Ando said government troops had launched pursuit operations against the MILF following the Mamasapano attack.

Some 6,000 people were displaced by subsequent clashes between Army troopers, backed by helicopter gunships, and MILF guerrillas in Barangay Darampua in Sultan sa Barongis, Maguindanao and in Kabasalan, Pikit, North Cotabato. ***Nash B. Maulana, PDI Mindanao Bureau***

Expanded ARMM emerges as issue in local polls

KORONADAL CITY—Declaring it more important than their own election, rival politicians in South Cotabato are banding together to call on voters to reject the province's inclusion in the proposed expanded Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

Rep. Daisy Avance-Fuentes, who is running for governor, has vowed to put the issue at the forefront of her campaign.

"It is very important that the people should vote 'no' so I am putting emphasis in this campaign," she said.

Fuentes was one of Congress' "Tres Marias," along with former Rep. Maria Clara Lobregat of Zamboanga City and Rep. Luwalhati Antonino of General Santos City, who led the opposition to the creation of the Southern Philippines Council for Peace and Development.

According to Malacañang, people in the 14-province, 10-city SPCPD would vote in a plebiscite on May 14 if they want their area included in the proposed expanded autonomous region. The council now covers 15 provinces and 13 cities.

The consolidated bill that amended the Organic Act creating the ARMM did not specify the date of the plebiscite.

In the 1989 plebiscite, 96 percent of those who voted in South Cotabato rejected inclusion in the ARMM.

Fuentes said it would be very difficult for South Cotabato, where almost 80 percent are non-Moro, to be part of the proposed expanded region, claiming this would provide for the virtual infusion of Islamic beliefs and customs in local governance.

"People may forget to vote for me or other candidates but they should never forget to vote no for ARMM inclusion," Fuentes said.

T'boli Mayor Dad Tuan and lawyer Ernesto Catedral of Lakas-NUCD, who are both seeking the gubernatorial post, also vowed to launch an intensive campaign against the province's inclusion in the proposed expanded region.

They cited the bureaucratic "red tape" and the unending financial problems in the ARMM.

Allen V. Estabillo, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Bayan Muna fields bets

DAVAO CITY—Party-list hopeful Bayan Muna is fielding at least four candidates for local polls here, Cagayan de Oro City and Caloocan City as the group's leaders expressed optimism of better chances of winning seats in the local government units.

Crispin Beltran, Bayan Muna vice chair, said his group could have fielded more, especially in Cebu, the Bicol provinces, Samar, and in other areas in Mindanao but it did not have enough time to prepare.

He said Teddy Casiño, secretary general of the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan, is also considering running for congressman of Makati City.

Yesterday was the last day of filing of certificates of candidacy for local elective posts and seats in the House of Representatives.

Beltran said Bayan Muna had not intended to field candidates for elective posts this May since it had planned to concentrate on winning all three seats for party-list groups in the House.

But he said it was encouraged to field candidates after the Commission on Elections allowed it to install poll watchers and granted it rights enjoyed by registered political parties.

Robinson Montalba, chair of Bayan Muna in Davao City, said "favorable" acceptance of the public to militant leaders and the party also prompted its leaders to field candidates for local posts.

The Bayan Muna chapter here is fielding Alvin Luque, Bayan-Davao City secretary general, and lawyer Angela Librado of the Public Attorney's Office, as candidates for the 26-member city council.

Luque and Librado are also running as "guest candidates" of the local political party Hugpong sa mga Tawong Lungsod, which established an alliance with the PDP-Laban of Senate President Aquilino Pimentel Jr.

Montalba said Bayan Muna was also fielding non-government organization worker Lalay Garcia of the Mindanao Partnership for Human Development for city councilor in Cagayan de Oro.

Nathanael Santiago, Bayan Muna secretary general, is running for a council post in Caloocan City. *Jowel F. Canuday, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

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Killings prompt fielding of more cops

SAN FERNANDO CITY—More policemen will be deployed in Balaoan town following the killing of two political followers and the burning of its public market last week.

Supt. Samuel Diciano, La Union police director, said at least 30 policemen were earlier sent to augment the town's 20-member police force.

The policemen, who belong to the provincial mobile group, have been setting up checkpoints to prevent the movement of armed men, especially at night, he said.

Diciano did not name the political party involved, but at least two persons were vying for the mayoral post in Balaoan—former mayor Casiano Ledda and reelectionist Mayor Joaquin Ostrea Jr. of Lakas-NUCD.

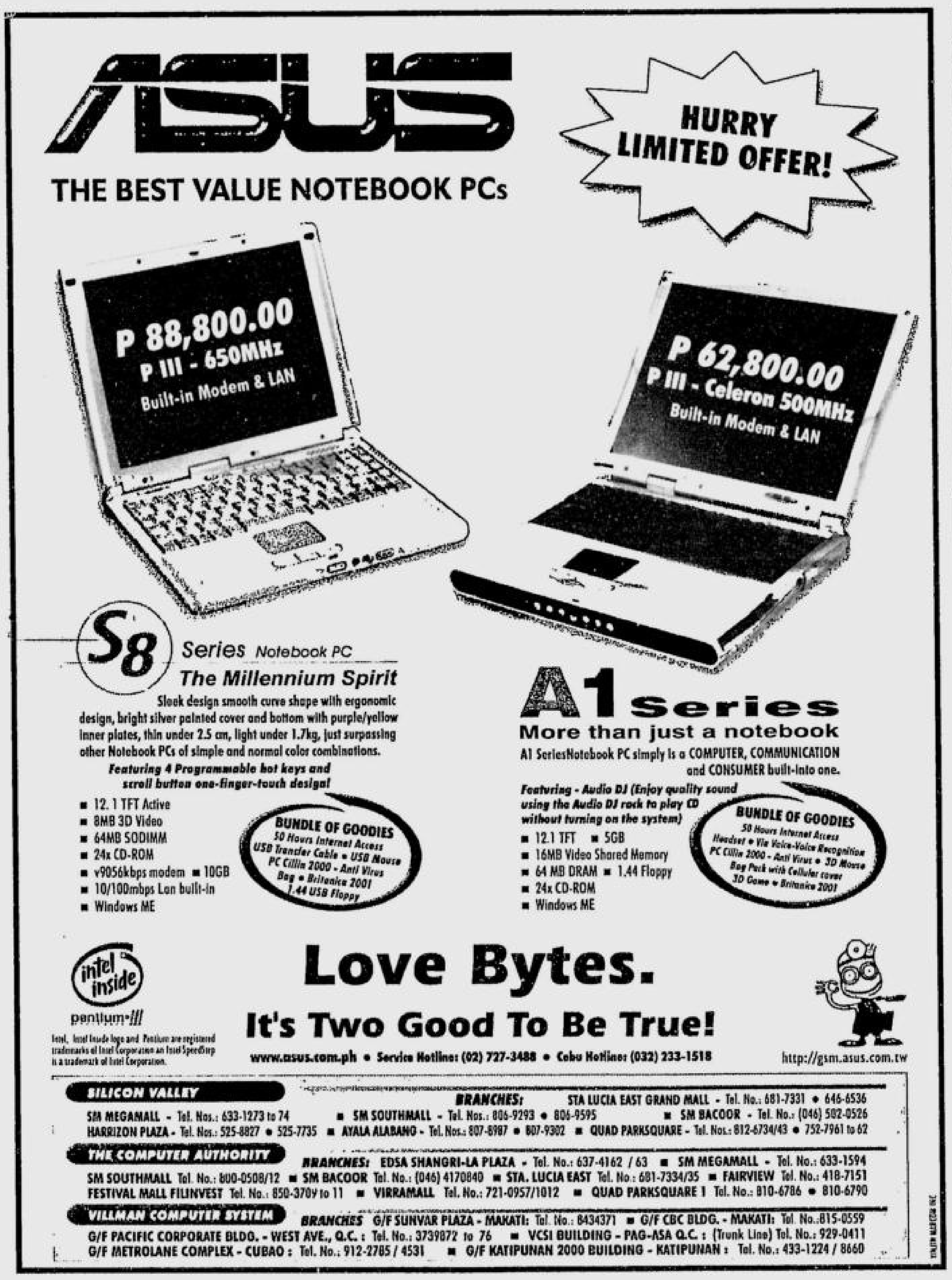
Diciano identified the latest victim of what he described as a "politically motivated killing" as Mario Oliver, secretary of the Rimando-Ledda law office in Balaoan.

Olivar, Ledda's follower, was gunned down on Feb. 19 while waiting for workers to finish repairing his car at a machine shop in the poblacion.

Diciano refused to identify the gunmen pending the filing of murder charges.

Two days later, Balaoan's public market was razed by fire.

But Diciano would not say if the burning was related to politics. Unconfirmed reports said it was the work of the "other camp to deliver a message." ***Peter La. Julian, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau***



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Pols' relatives lead House races in Metro

(From page A1)

candidacies said the poll body's selection was discriminatory and anti-poor.

"Is this a popularity contest? Maybe we have to join show biz first," said a businessman among those thrown out of the list of official candidates for senator.

The businessman, who was among the first to file his candidacy, went to the Comelec yesterday to file a motion for reconsideration.

But he was told to wait for an official resolution to be issued by the poll body en banc, or the chair and the six commissioners acting as one.

"How can we change the political system in the Philippines if in the Comelec level, the candidacies of ordinary people like us are blocked?" said the disqualified candidate, who declined to be named pending the filing of his appeal.

"We don't know if it's principle or money that's needed to be able to serve the country. Check the list of those deemed qualified and you'll see what they have that we don't," he said in Filipino.

Here's his clincher: "Do we have to be actors, comedians or action stars to qualify? Are we required to know how to read the news on TV or to have a good voice for radio?"

According to the Comelec, a candidate of a political party may spend P105 million during the campaign, and an independent candidate, P175 million.

"It does not necessarily mean that (one) should have that amount of money," Comelec Chair Alfredo Benipayo said. "It's whether (one has) the capability (to conduct a nationwide campaign)."

House aspirants

Look at who's angling for seats in the House.

In Quezon City, father-and-son tandem Ismael Mathay Jr. and Ismael "Chuck" Mathay III yesterday filed their candidacies for congressmen in the fourth and second districts of Quezon City, respectively.

Chuck, who was earlier groomed to succeed his father as mayor, will go up against Marvina Reina Liban (wife of incumbent and third-termer Rep. Dante Liban), Councilor Winnie Castelo, Gil Baynosa and Tirso Gavero.

Cynthia Villar, wife of former Speaker Manuel Villar, is running for the lone district of Las Piñas.

Mayor Mathay, on the other hand, is running against former Rep. Edcel Lagman, Bayani Hipol and independent Ricardo Tañada.

Lagman said that, among other things, he was running "to fearlessly expose any betrayal of the spirit of Edsa, particularly by those who claim to be among its many fathers."

In the third district, a sister of third-termer Rep. Michael Defensor, Maria Teresa, is seeking to succeed her brother, who is now chair of the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council. She will go up against Sen. Anna Dominique "Nikki" Coseteng, who once represented the district in the House.

In San Juan, ABS-CBN correspondent Ronald Estella filed his certificate of candidacy under the People Power Coalition to challenge incumbent Rep. Jose Mari Gonzalez and Estrada's Executive Secretary Ronaldo Zamora.

"San Juan is not Estrada country," Estella declared. "Even though the family has governed San Juan for many decades, the conditions of the poor there have not improved."

Aurora Rosario Oreta, daughter of Sen. Tessie Aquino-Oreta, will run for congresswoman in the lone district of Malabon-Navotas, under the Nationalist People's Coalition (NPC). She is going up against reelectionist Rep. Federico Sandoval II of Lakas.

In the lone district of Muntinlupa City, Rozzano Rufino Biazon, son of Sen. Rodolfo Biazon, is running under the Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino, challenging reelectionist Rep. Ignacio Bunye of the Lakas-NUCD.

Former Sen. Freddie Webb is bidding to return to the House, this time in the lone district of Pasay City, up against Gabor, Consuelo Dy of Lakas, reelectionist Rep. Rolando Briones of the NPC, and independent Allan "El Shaddai" Carreon.

Webb used to represent Parañaque.

In Parañaque, Reyes will go up against Jose Enrico Golez, son of ex-Rep. and now National Security Adviser Roilo Golez, of the Liberal Party; Wally Ferrer of PDP-Laban; Maritess Asis of the LDP-NP-NPC; Nid "Long Hair" Alcantara of the LP; Eduardo "Edza" Zialcita of Lakas; and independent Corazon Valenzuela.

In the second district of Valenzuela City, reelectionist Rep. Magtanggol Gunigundo of Lakas will be challenged by Antonio Maceda Serapio of NPC.

As of 7 p.m. yesterday, 89 congressional candidates in Metro Manila had filed their candidacies with the Comelec-NCR office in Intramuros. Deadline for filing is 12 midnight.

Reyes' calling

Interviewed by the INQUIRER yesterday while he was preparing his candidacy papers, Reyes said he wanted to continue serving the people—a calling he said he chose when he first started his professional career as an investigative journalist of the pre-martial law Manila Times.

Asked why he was entering politics, the 65-year-old Reyes said: "Essentially, as a newspaperman and short-time diplomat, I always considered my work as public service.

"In going into politics, I just feel that I'm continuing my calling."

Reyes has served as newspaper reporter and editor, magazine publisher, television network reporter and later executive, and press secretary.

He was recently told to wind up his affairs at Meco in Taipei, where he served as unofficial envoy.

Reyes said that in running for office, he was simply responding to President Macapagal-Arroyo's call for "new politics."

But he said that what actually caused him to go into politics was the turn of events that made it necessary for him to give up his post at Meco.

Earlier, the President said the Meco post was there "for the asking" of Lt. Gen. Edgardo Espinosa, whose chances of being named Armed Forces chief of staff had dimmed.

"I thought I'll be spending my last years in Meco," said Reyes.

Now he's in earnest about pursuing plans on how to help develop Parañaque.

Presumption of innocence

Probably anticipating a swarm of media people who have been staking out the Comelec-NCR office since Monday, Jimenez sent his lawyer to file his certificate of candidacy on Tuesday night at around 7:30 p.m.

Now chair of the Manila Times, Jimenez, 54, will run as an independent against Carlos Fernandez of the administration-backed People Power Çoalition, Bienvenido Abante of Lakas, Pablo Ocampo of NPC, and independents Velrio Reloj and Richard Bautista.

Comelec Chair Benipayo said Jimenez could not be prevented from running despite the United States' request for his extradition.

"He has not yet been convicted, has he? One may have been charged with a crime, but if he has not been convicted, then the presumption of innocence still holds," Benipayo said.

"I am not saying he should not be voted for. But if they vote for him—and in the past the people voted for (candidates) who should not have been voted into office—then they deserve the kind they vote for," he added.

Jimenez has so far managed to evade extradition, allegedly making full use of his closeness to Estrada to block all efforts to return him to America.

Perez said that while the Department of Justice could not stop Jimenez from running, this did not mean that his victory in the elections would bar it from fulfilling the government's obligation as stated in the extradition treaty.

"We can't stop him from running. (But) if he thinks he can prevent his extradition if he wins, that's wrong. We will pursue the extradition even if he wins," Perez said in Taglish in an interview over dzMM.

Perez clarified, however, that the DOJ would start the extradition process only after Jimenez had told the courts what he knew about Estrada's illegal business transactions.

Jimenez has expressed his desire to become a state witness in the criminal cases, mostly plunder, against Estrada. Whether he is bargaining for non-extradition in exchange for his testimony remains unconfirmed.

"We are interested in (Jimenez's) testimony. We will ask the Americans that he be allowed to testify here (in Manila) before he is extradited," Perez said.

'The Group' to take over chaotic PPC campaign

(From page A1)

until the expected takeover of "The Group," led by Conrado "Dodi" Limcaoco and Paul Aquino.

Limcaoco served as liaison of former President Corazon Aquino and Manila Archbishop Jaime Cardinal Sin with various forces in the former United Opposition working to oust former President Joseph Estrada.

Paul Aquino, brother-in-law of Corazon Aquino, worked with the failed presidential campaigns of the late Speaker Ramon Mitra Jr. in 1992 and Alfredo Lim in 1998.

Vice President Guingona is supposed to call the shots as national campaign manager, but Aquino has been given the task of handling the nuts and bolts as "campaign director." Limcaoco is supposed to be the PPC spokesperson.

In an interview, Limcaoco denied that Lakas would be sidelined. "No. Lakas is a major party, probably the strongest partner. But still, the PPC is a coalition made up of different parties whose interests must all be served," he said.

Jose Rufino, Lakas national executive director, would join Limcaoco and Aquino in running the PPC campaign, insiders said.

Rufino also denied any power play. "There's no conflict. The PPC is not composed of Lakas alone so we're just assisting the whole ticket because it's the President's ticket," he said.

Personality differences

But other insiders attribute foul-ups in campaign schedules and the failure of the coalition's 13 candidates to campaign together as one unified slate to personality and political differences among the candidates and campaign handlers.

The official said the coalition partners did not want to be closely identified with Lakas in case the Macapagal administration "fails, or delivers a mediocre performance."

"They will have their own candidate for President (in 2004)," the official said.

THE FAVORITE senatorial candidate of former President Cory Aquino is Winnie Monsod, and shows it at a meeting with volunteers in Makati City.

He said the power struggle was exacerbated by the President's decision to keep out of party affairs. "She feels she should be above all this," the official said, referring to the apparent disunity among the parties.

No headquarters

So far, the PPC has not even set up formal campaign headquarters.

Reporters assigned to the campaign trail have had problems with the PPC schedule. Last week, a campaign sortie to the Ilocos region was supposedly finalized for today only to be replaced by a sortie in Cagayan de Oro tomorrow.

A group of reporters was also set to leave for the campaign in the Bicol region last week only to be told at the last minute that arrangements were cancelled.

When asked, the Lakas media bureau knew nothing about the campaign rally in Cagayan de Oro and Iligan City even though the President is expected to attend.

Even outsiders like Senate President Aquilino Pimentel Jr. have taken note of the disorganization. The lawmaker cited this as reason for his controversial prediction that only four PPC candidates would win.

"(They) were campaigning on their own individually. One goes to Mindanao by himself, he does not even inform the local coalition group supporting the administration. So that creates tension," Pimentel said.

"And if they persist in pursuing that kind of political tactic, then they are bound to wind up with very few candidates winning the senatorial race. It was my attempt to call attention to the fact that they better shape up, start acting as one," he added.

Growing pains

Sen. Juan Flavier admitted there were problems bugging the coalition but stressed these were mere "growing pains."

"That is the problem with the concept of a coalition. We are (composed of) six groups and you have to do a balancing act," Flavier said.

He said the problem is more pronounced in local politics.

"For example in Catanduanes, there were two groups there. So we have to go to two rallies and eat two lunches as a Solomonic solution," Flavier said.

Limcaoco admitted that "coalition politics is always a challenge but it does not mean it is fragmented as the other side wants to project it."

Limcaoco said he and Paul Aquino were "brought in on the day the certificates were filed" by the PPC candidates on Feb. 12.

"The advantage of Paul and I is that we do not belong to any one party. We belong to all," Limcaoco said.

Apart from the proclamation rally held after the filing of certificates at the Commission on Elections, the candidates have not campaigned as a complete slate in rallies held in Laguna, the Bicol region, Muntinlupa and Makati City.

"Except in rare instances, it's hard to complete the slate (for each rally). But we are averaging nine" candidates per rally, Flavier said.

Who's with what (again)

With Lakas in the lead, the PPC is composed of Raul Roco's Aksyon Demokratiko, Renato de Villa's Reporma, Lito Osmeña's Promdi, and the Liberal Party, whose members supported the People Power II uprising that ousted Joseph Estrada on Jan. 20. Partido Demokratiko Pilipino has one candidate in the coalition.

Most of the coalition's 13 senatorial candidates were chosen from the parties; the others are independent allies.

Flavier, Rep. Ernesto Herrera and former Gov. Roberto "Obet" Pagdanganan are the original Lakas candidates on the ticket. Senators Franklin Drilon and Ramon Magsaysay Jr., the slate's survey topnotchers, registered as independents, as did former Speaker Manuel Villar. Former internal revenue commissioner Liwayway Vinzons-Chato is with Reporma.

Former House prosecutor Rep. Joker Arroyo and economist Solita "Winnie" Monsod are recent recruits of Aksyon Demokratiko, while Rep. Wigberto Tañada and lawyer Francis Pangilinan belong to the LP. Rep. Ralph Recto is with Lakas while Sen. Sergio Osmeña III belongs to Pimentel's PDP-Laban.

Rich Chinoys . . .

(From page A1)

were among the vehicles that came to pick up opposition bet Panfilo Lacson from the airport here.

Reelectionist Davao City Councilor Menchie Cataluña, an official of the Ping Lacson for Senator Movement ("Pls. Movement"), said the cars, as well as funds used for posters, streamers, hotel accommodations and food were provided by rich Filipino-Chinese traders who had contributed to the presidential campaign of Joseph Estrada in 1998.

"Mindanao is Erap country so the people turned out in full force and in full support for his candidates like Ping Lacson," Cataluña said.

The classy convoy drove the former chief of the Philippine National Police around Davao del Norte, Compostela Valley and this city in his first campaign sortie in the region.

The Mindanao Times News reported in its website that some of Lacson supporters were "well-known financiers of illegal gambling and operators of sleazy night joints," without identifying anyone.

Lacson's sway over the police was still evident during his visit here. Traffic policemen, for instance, did nothing when Lacson's party double-parked on the two-lane street outside the hotel.

At least 50 cars, vans and trucks joined the candidate's convoy in various functions here and in Davao del Norte and Compostela Valley on Tuesday.

Supporters with large streamers and posters greeted Lacson as soon as he disembarked from a Lear Jet that had carried him and reelectionist Sen. Gregorio Honasan here after an overnight stay in Zamboanga City.

In Zamboanga, Lacson was seen being escorted by personnel from the Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Task Force (PAOCTF) Mindanao Area 2 and the Philippine National Police during his sorties.

Taboo

City Councilor wannabe Jaime Cabato said Lacson had security personnel and even used PAOCTF and PNP vehicles.

"The use of government resources for political activities is a taboo," Cabato said.

But Lacson told the INQUIRER on Monday that he would never use the resources of the PNP in Zamboanga especially during campaign sorties.

"I'm reminding them (PNP) to be apolitical," he said at the time.

Chief Supt. Dominador Domingo Jr., police chief for Western Mindanao, said the security men and vehicles for Lacson were "provided by the city government."

He said City Mayor Maria Clara Lobregat had directed the police to provide security for Lacson, who arrived in time for the 64th celebration of the Dia de Zamboanga.

"He was the guest of honor of the said affair, so it was also understandable that the city government would also provide him with security," Domingo said.

But lawyer Helen Aguila-Flores, Comelec chief for Western Mindanao, said the alleged use of government equipment during Lacson's sortie was "very unfortunate."

Flores urged those who complained to formally file charges before the Comelec.

Edge

In Davao City, Lacson clearly had an edge over Honasan, one of the 11 senator-judges who voted to block key evidence in Joseph Estrada's impeachment trial.

The former PNP chief's campaign posters were all over the city. Honasan, on the other hand, practically had none announcing his reelection bid.

At a dinner with supporters at the Royal Mandaya Hotel in Davao City, the star of the show was Lacson, not Honasan.

Lacson's name dominated the stage of the ballroom where the dinner was held.

But Honasan said he did not mind that the preparations were focused more on Lacson "since we are in the same party."

Contrast

In contrast to the spectacle of Lacson's campaign, senatorial hopefuls Perfecto Yasay (Independent), the former Securities and Exchange Commission chair, and Wigberto Tañada (People Power Coalition) were driven around in less expensive vehicles and had fewer posters.

Tañada rode an Isuzu Adventure when he went to a consultation with members of the Mindanao Rural Congress of farmers and *lumads* at the Feliz Beach Resort here.

Yasay said he had nothing against Lacson but added that the people should be "angered" by the "grand" display of wealth on the campaign trail.

Wong hits Marines over video release

(From page A1)

phoned him as early as Feb. 21 to apologize for implicating him in the supposed deal.

Biazon quoted Wong as saying that he did not mean what he had said.

AFP sources said Biazon had a hand in Wong's ouster as Navy flag officer in command following his row with the Marines over his speech.

A source said Biazon was "one of those who made representations" with AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Angelo Reyes prior to Reyes' offer for Wong to be transferred to the Northern Command.

The Board of Generals chaired by Reyes has reportedly recommended Rear Adm. Victorino Hingco as replacement for Wong, who steps down today as Navy chief. *(Story on Page A1.)*

Military insiders described Hingco as "an amiable officer who can get along well with other officers and men."

"He is like an ordinary Filipino, one who is not expected to rock the boat," a source said.

Hingco is currently AFP deputy chief of staff for Reservist and Retiree Affairs (J-10).

He is a reserve officer and reportedly an adopted member of the Philippine Military Academy Class of 1969, to which Wong belongs.

The board's "unanimous recommendation" will depend on the approval of President Macapagal-Arroyo and Acting Defense Secretary Eduardo Ermita, a source said.

Influential

Sources said Marine officers and retired commandants conferred with one another shortly after Wong's Feb. 15 speech and agreed to seek his relief.

"Biazon is an influential person. He can influence the chief of staff and many others," a source said.

Earlier, the Marines said their "Council of Elders" had drawn up a manifesto against Wong. The document has yet to be made public.

When Wong's rift with the Marines came to light, Biazon issued statements explaining why his former comrades-in-arms were asking for the admiral's relief.

It was Wong who cancelled two winning bids for the purchase of night-vision goggles and related communication equipment worth P10 million.

The money came from Biazon's Congressional Initiatives Allocation (CIA), a form of pork barrel.

Biazon admitted Tuesday that he had made "an insertion for the purchase of special equipment." But he said he did not know if the money was ever released.

Two private companies—Lemus for the Marines and Timbol Trading for the Navy Headquarters—came up with the supposedly winning bids.

Biazon admitted that a godson of his owned the firm Lemus. He reiterated that his wife scolded his godson's wife for dropping his name in her transactions with the military.

As Wong noted in his Feb. 15 speech, the prices offered were too close to each other, indicating that the bids were rigged.

He also pointed out that the two firms were "connected" to Biazon.

"Those doing the transactions with our procurement office were saying that they're connected to (Biazon)," Wong said yesterday in Filipino.

"There were persons citing (Biazon's) name. That's the report I received. These people are saying they're connected to him so that they'll gain favor from our people conducting the bids," Wong said.

The admiral also said that the P10 million was intact, and that the contract would be subjected to rebidding.

He said he was merely introducing reforms in the military, which he had long been dreaming of. But "sadly, I was effectively removed (as Navy chief) for doing that," he said.

Wong conceded that his superiors in the AFP probably considered the "bigger picture" in deciding to ease him out of the Navy.

"(But) it was not explained to me. I wish I knew," he said.

In Iloilo City, former Defense Secretary Orlando Mercado came to Wong's defense, saying the admiral "should have been promoted and given a medal instead of being punished."

"I know he is an honest man. We had been working together for a procurement system in the AFP that is fully accountable and transparent," Mercado said.

Grievous

Biazon said that on Feb. 21, Wong phoned to say that he had reviewed the videotape of his speech before the Marines and realized that he had said things he did not mean.

"I committed a grievous mistake by mentioning your name, but what I said was not what I meant," Biazon quoted Wong as saying.

The senator said Wong actually wanted to "use my name as an example of a good officer," but "because of the heat of the discussion and (his) enthusiasm (over) what to tell the Marines, (he) said something (he) did not mean."

He said he accepted Wong's apology then and forgot about it until he read yesterday's news reports linking him to the transaction.

According to Biazon, Wong went to two radio stations yesterday to clarify that "there was no scam, no mess, and that I am not involved" in the aborted P10-million deal.

"I'm glad Wong made the clarifications in spite of (Reyes') gag order on him," Biazon said.

Biazon, who chairs the Senate committee on national defense, said he requested the release of the P10 million from his CIA by way of response to the Marines' request for assistance for the equipment they needed in their operations against the Abu Sayyaf and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front.

A paper prepared by the senator showed that he made the request to then Budget Secretary Benjamin Diokno on June 30 last year, and that the final budget allocation amounted to P20 million for the goggles because Sen. Gregorio Honasan had provided P10 million more.

Informal

Saying that Wong's statements yesterday had clarified his supposed involvement in the transaction, Biazon said he planned to conduct next week an "informal inquiry" on the Marines' alleged purchase of substandard helmets and HK-MP5 assault rifles.

He expressed the belief that this was the "real issue" at hand.

"My inhibition (to lead the inquiry) has been removed by Wong's clarifications," Biazon told reporters.

He said he planned to call on Wong, Marine commandant Maj. Gen. Librado Ladia and Lt. Gen. Edgardo Espinosa, one of seven ranking military officers implicated in the irregular transactions.

But he said anyone was free to raise the issue on the transaction involving the goggles in the informal inquiry.

He also said the Office of the Ombudsman, to which the AFP had submitted documents, should pursue the case as well.

Senate President Aquilino Pimentel, however, said it would be "better" if the Ombudsman conducted the investigation on the purchase of helmets and rifles.

Earlier in the news conference, Biazon said he was a victim of the "instability in the AFP" that came after People Power II.

"The instability . . . is taking its toll, and this includes maneuvers from some sectors to implicate people in some issues. I was included in the fallout," he said.

Comprehensive

Malacañang wants a comprehensive check on other deals and contracts involving the acquisition of arms and equipment.

In a phone interview with the INQUIRER, Ms Macapagal's spokesperson Renato Corona said the Office of the Ombudsman as well as the military and police should take a more pro-active stand in checking reports of graft among men in uniform.

Corona said the success of this effort rested on how well the people would cooperate with the Ombudsman and dutifully report incidents of graft.

He said that in its effort to investigate the Marine Corps' alleged irregular purchase of arms and helmets, the government would not let the big role that some military officials played in People Power II to get in the way of prosecution.

"If everybody will invoke friendship (to escape prosecution), nothing will happen to us," he said.

At an earlier news briefing, Corona said the Palace was not losing sleep over the conflict between Wong and Marine officers.

"We don't find this issue of military politics alarming. We are used to this. That's happening all the time . . . even in the civilian bureaucracy," he said.

He also said the matter was best left to the "commanders" to resolve.

"Let's not drag Malacañang" into it, he added. ***With reports from Armand N. Nocum in Manila; Nestor P. Burgos Jr., PDI Visayas Bureau***

Admiral Wong ships out today

(From page A1)

former Navy Capt. Proceso Maligalig, the Navy chief would not even allow his staff car to be used to drive his two children to school.

Maligalig said: "He's a decent officer. It's unfortunate he's been forced out."

When the INQUIRER interviewed him for the first time in the aftermath of his dispute with the Marines, Wong had personally cut his calling card from a computer-generated sheet.

"The writing in the wall is clear. Let's stop wasting people's money," Wong said then.

Wong recalled that after he was appointed Navy chief, a friend of one of his children remarked to Wong's child: FOIC (Flag Officer In Command) *na pala ang daddy mo. Siguro ang yaman yaman niyo na*(Your dad is now FOIC; you must be very rich now)?"

"It's the culture of corruption we must tear down. It's a culture that expects people to be corrupt because that's the system. But you can ask anybody here in the Navy. I didn't get anything," Wong said.

2nd generation Chinese

A second generation Chinese-Filipino, who traces his paternal roots to Canton, China, Wong rose from the ranks after graduating from the PMA in 1969. He was in command of the five Navy ships and various naval task groups. His shore assignments included staff duties in administration, intelligence, operations, training, systems analysis and design and materials management.

Wong also became superintendent of the Naval Officer's Schools Center and commander of the Naval Education and Training Center.

On Nov. 15, 1999, he was designated deputy chief of staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines for Educational and Training (J-8) at General Headquarters in Camp Aguinaldo.

Wong assumed the post of vice commander of the Navy on June 1, 2000. On Nov. 22, 2000, President Estrada named him to the highest naval post, that of flag officer in command.

A product of the Philippine public school system, Wong was also an exchange student during his senior year in high school under the American Field Service International Scholarship.

Wong obtained masteral degrees in Industrial Engineering from the University of the Philippines and in national security administration from the National Defense College of the Philippines.

Floating

His career in the high seas ends on a "floating" status.

AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Angelo Reyes had been ordered by President Macapagal-Arroyo to investigate Wong's exposé on Feb. 15 about irregularities committed by Marine officers.

They said they were for reforms, too, but resented Wong's style of talking about it before the entire corps including the rank and file.

Marine officers had reportedly given Reyes two options to resolve their fight with Wong: Either he dissolves the Marines or let Wong go.

Reyes chose to remove him from his Navy command and offered him the recently integrated Northern Luzon Command. Wong considered this a demotion, and chose to leave the service earlier than his scheduled date of retirement in December. Until his retirement, he will be on "floating status" at the Naval Station in Fort Bonifacio.

He has no immediate plans after he hands over the command. "I will gather the pieces of my military career inside a box and . . ."

Though without regrets, Wong is going with a large sense of loss. "I was hoping I could stay. I was already in the center. I could have done a lot more."

Wong, however, heartened that his call for reforms has received a sympathetic ear among the young crop of officers as well as ordinary enlisted men like sergeants, though they can't come up in public to say he was right.

Values

"I'm so happy that people still have values. We may not clean up today or tomorrow but we will change," Wong said.

Retired military officers, however, said that Wong could have accomplished reforms had he done it in a different way.

The former Army commanding general, Fortunato Abat, said: "It boils down to how superior officers relate themselves to the rank and file."

Retired Brig. Gen. Ernesto Giddaya, chair of the Association of General and Flag Officers, said: "There are many ways of skinning a cat."

In his controversial Feb. 15 speech before the Marines, Wong said the movie "A Few Good Men" which deals with an incident in the US Marines depicted what is happening inside the corps.

"The people down the ranks, the privates, corporals, they follow the chain of command. They follow the Code of Honor, but the top brass, they don't follow. That's the story of A Few Good Men.. It shouldn't be like that, and sadly, I see that here in our Marines," Wong rued.

Raquel Tiglao dies; 53

RAQUEL Edralin-Tiglao, co-founder and former executive director of the Women's Crisis Center, passed away yesterday at the Cardinal Santos Medical Center. She was 53.

She is survived by her husband Rigoberto, daughter Ria and sons Xandro and Dart.

Her body lies in state at the Church of the Holy Sacrifice, UP Diliman Campus, Quezon City. Interment will be announced later.

Rigoberto (Bobi) is the editor in chief of INQ7 Interactive, the joint-venture news delivery company of the Philippine Daily Inquirer and GMA Network. He also writes a column, Outlook, for the INQUIRER's print edition three times a week.

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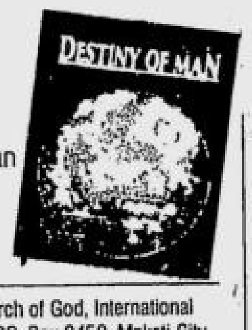

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Tyson not wrestling in Japan

NEW YORK—Mike Tyson might box in the United States in May. As for wrestling in Japan in June—no way. "Not only is Mike not wrestling there, he has never spoken to these people," Shelly Finkel, Tyson's adviser, said Tuesday about reports that the former undisputed heavyweight champion is planning to wrestle in Japan. Finkel was angered by a statement released in London by Frank Maloney, manager of WBC-IBF champion Lennox Lewis of Britain. *AP*

SPORTS

AL S. MENDOZA, Editor ▨ EDWIN M. VILLANUEVA, Assistant Editor

Agassi struggles vs Korean

SAN JOSE, California—Andre Agassi had trouble with South Korean Lee Hyung-taik in the first-round of the Sybase Open, but the Australian Open winner still prevailed, 7-5, 3-6, 6-3. Lee, speaking through a translator, said the match had boosted his confidence and he was "satisfied." *AP*

CAP-SOUTHWOODS 2ND

Canlubang keeps PAL golfest lead

BY AL S. MENDOZA
Sports Editor

CEBU CITY—Nine-time champion Canlubang found CAP-Southwoods as its closest pursuer yesterday, but the leader's 15-point margin appeared small with two rounds left in the 54th PAL Interclub here.

That is, if the estimation of Thirdy Escano, Southwoods' team captain, is to be believed.

"We still have a chance," said Thirdy Escano, CAP-Southwoods' team captain. "We are just 15 points down. Tomorrow's (today) round at Club Filipino will be crucial."

Club Filipino in Danao has been proving to be the participants' scourge. Many of the entries in the 15th PAL Seniors Interclub rued the course's difficult greens and tight fairways.

Whoever is ahead after today's outcome at Club Filipino will definitely put a vise-grip on the crown.

In posting their 15-point margin, the Sugar Barons of Canlubang fired 137 at Cebu Country Club in a big leap from its 128 at Club Filipino de Cebu behind the even-par 36 points of Solomon Gines, 35s of Jun Cedo and Boyet Zaragosa and 31 of Jose Ma. Hechanova.

CAP's Woodsmen, downed by 16 after Round 1, gained but a measly point with their 138 for 250, 15 points behind Canlubang in the five-to-play, four-to-count format.

Reigning champion Angelo Que scored 38 in leading CAP-Southwoods, followed by Montito Garcia and Cookie La'O with 34s and Artemio Murakami with 32.

Luisita dropped to third from second despite Jinky Tuason's 38 in this national golf team championship that rewards 3 points to a birdie, 2 to a par and 1 to a bogey.

"We came here without a chance of winning as we are rebuilding our team," said Iggy Clavecilla, Luisita's team captain, who had 34. Jojo Guingona had 30 and EmilioTuason 29. "We have young recruits and in two years time, I believe we will be back to battle for the championship."

Luisita's 248 (117-131) is 23 points ahead of Wack Wack (102-123=225), whose scorers were Bones Floro with 32, Sammy Sy with 32, Elphege Wong with 30 and Cosco Oben with 29.

"I could have been happier with a bigger lead," Luigi Yulo, Canlubang's team captain. "We have what it takes to win. It will all depend on tomorrow's round."

Yulo said CAP-Southwoods made a tactical error in Round 1 when "it did not load up its lineup with its supposed top guns."

The quintet of CAP-Southwoods in Round 1 made only 112 against Canlubang's opening blast of 128 at Club Filipino de Cebu. Southwoods' scorers Tuesday were Chucho Martinez with 30, Toru Nakajima with 29, Juami Rocha with 28 and Jun Jun Plana with 25.

Dorothy Joy Delasin, the 2000 PSA Athlete of the Year, will arrive today to play with top officials led by lawyer Doming Duerme, tournament chair.

The major sponsors include ABS-CBN, Airbus Industrie, G.E. Aircraft Engines, Mareco, Asia Brewery, Boeing, FortuneTobacco, Tanduay, U-Bix , DHL and Pilipinas Shell.

Other scores:

Championship—Valley 104=194, Negros 115=213, John Hay 100=188, Manila Golf 106=192, Alabang 99=179, Bacolod 104=176, Lanang 96=167, Alta Vista 87=160, Sydney 67=144, Vancouver 72=128, Greenhills 55=126, Brotherhood 61=120, Xiamen 71=122, Jap-Fil 65=104, Moffett Field 56=97, Brookside 86, Mt. Malindang 82, Maharlika 80, Victorias 71, Paga San Jose 61, Par Excellance 50, Golfinos 47.

Founders—Cebu 112=222, Pueblo de Oro 107=212, Riviera 111=206, Forest Hills 97=190, Apo 101=180, Villamor 97=168, Navy 80=153, Pamplona 67=149, Bay Area 76=135.

Sportswriters—Club Filipino 96=198, Evangelista 84=182, Crystal Spring 95=181, Iligan 105=180, Mabuhay 87=176, Team L.A. 88=173, Intramuros 90=174, Capitol 93=163, Alliance 76=162, Lumbia 65=154, Zamboanga 72=153, Mercedes 63=144, Guinhalaran 67=127, Paoay 55=127, Fil-Am Fairfield 61=123, Hawaii 50=71, Baguio 53=121, Cotabato 48=115, Washington DC 49=111, Seattle 35=85, Riyadh 33=79, Riyadh FGA 27=73.

Friendship—So. Cotabato 77=172, San Juanico 68=167, Iloilo 76=158, UP Tee Jots 72=154, Pittsburgh 67=141, Heritage 67=139, British Columbia 63=138, Rolling Hills 58=117, Sky West 42=97.

JUVIC Pagunsan of Canlubang tees off on hole No. 9.

JESS YUSON

Woods gives major boost to Dubai tilt

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — The sign in large, bold letters at the lavish entrance to the Emirates Golf Club is a welcome one to organizers of the Dubai Desert Classic.

"Soldout."

That's because Tiger Woods has come halfway around the globe to the Arabian peninsula in search of his first tournament victory of the season. This has been one of the European Tour's best events for a decade with winners like Seve Ballesteros, Fred Couples and Jose Maria Olazabal.

Now it's an impossible ticket for all but 10,500 fans, many well-connected businessmen in this busy port and commercial center on the Persian Gulf.

"It gives everybody an added boost for him to come over here," Colin Montgomerie—another former winner—said Tuesday.

"All credit to him for coming. Yes, there's talk about money and payment, but come on, Tiger Woods doesn't need that incentive to come and play tournaments. There are an awful lot of top Americans that don't travel, and he's one who does."

Woods' astounding 2000 season was great for golf. The only thing better for the game in 2001 might be Woods' early slump, leaving him without a victory—or top-three finish—in five events.

"I think it's good for the game of golf that Tiger is not winning two out of three events he enters," said Montgomerie, who has finished first and third in opening events this year in Australian and Singapore.

"These guys are less afraid now. I don't think Tiger has lessened in any way. He was intimidating and still is an intimidating factor. But it's less intimidating than it was."

Woods played a "challenge match" Tuesday at the Jebel Ali Hotel course—a 20-minute drive from the Emirates Golf Club—and was sequestered away with the rest of the six-man field: his Florida neighbor Mark O'Meara, Thomas Bjorn, Lee Westwood, Darren Clarke and Montgomerie.

Woods' arrival from Los Angeles made headlines in the local "Gulf News" newspaper, which said "months of anticipation and excitement" were over as the American tries to add a Middle East victory to wins in Asia, South America and Europe. *AP*

Knicks spoil Ewing homecoming

NEW YORK—The night belonged to Patrick Ewing but the game belonged to the New York Knicks, who spoiled their former leader's homecoming with a 101-92 victory over the Seattle SuperSonics in the NBA on Tuesday.

Ewing, the heart of the Knicks for 15 years, returned to Madison Square Garden for the first time in a Seattle uniform and New York's all-time leading scorer and rebounder received a lengthy and emotional standing ovation and a video tribute.

"I thought it was great what the fans did," said the aging center, who was often criticized late in his career in New York for failing to bring the Knicks a championship.

"We have had a love-hate relationship throughout the years, but I thought they were appreciative of what I brought to the table every night. I thought they did a great job showing me their appreciation tonight," Ewing said.

"I wanted to come out and play well and have the team win. I take my hats off to the guys in the other locker room," added Ewing, who scored 10 of his 12 points in the first half but was thoroughly outplayed by Knicks center Marcus Camby.

Camby outscored Ewing 9-0 in the pivotal third quarter, when the Knicks held Seattle to 13, and finished with 21 points, 17 rebounds and five blocks.

"It was definitely emotional out there to see the big fella come back here," said Camby. "It was good to see he got the ovation. It was well deserved. But tonight was more about us as a basketball team."

Allan Houston scored 24 points, Latrell Sprewell added 21 and Glen Rice scored 11 of his 20 in the fourth quarter for New York. Recently re-acquired Knicks point guard Mark Jackson, who embraced Ewing before the game, just missed a triple double with nine points, 11 rebounds and 12 assists.

Rashard Lewis scored 13 of his 20 points in the final period, when Seattle got within 90-88 only to watch New York pull away. Gary Payton added 19 for the Sonics.

Knicks coach Jeff Van Gundy, a Ewing supporter to the bitter end, was moved by the crowd reaction.

"I didn't think it would be emotional for me," Van Gundy said. "The spontaneity of the crowd chanting his name was about the best thing I have seen at the Garden." *Reuters*

Complete results: Toronto 101, Cleveland 89; Miami 103, Washington 95; New York 101, Seattle 92; Portland 95, San Antonio 87; Dallas 116, Vancouver 112; Sacramento 106, L.A. Clippers 93, OT *AP*

Knights eyeing ex-PBA cagers

LOSING Bonel Balingit poses no serious concern for the San Juan Knights. Though they've gotten smaller sans the hulking 6-foot-9 center, the Knights would definitely be a lot faster for this year's MBA competitions.

Two former PBA players—Benny Cheng and Danilo Aying—and Pasig-Rizal standout Gilbert Castillo are vying for slots in the Andok's-supported Knights, who will be defending their national title when the MBA opens its fourth season on June 3.

Negotiations are also underway for the Knights, owned by Sandy Javier and backed by San Juan Mayor Jinggoy Estrada, to acquire a yet-to-be named legitimate center.

Sans Balingit, San Juan coach Philip Cezar would only have 6-foot-8 Fil-Am Rafi Reavis and 6-foot-6 Philippine team member Omanzie Rodriguez to man the slot. *Roy Luarca*

REYES

Reyes is fans' top male cue artist

EFREN "Bata" Reyes continues to be popular with fans not only here but also in the United States despite his long absence from the US pool circuit.

Since he won the World Pool Championship in Cardiff, Wales, in 1999, the captain of the Puyat Sports team of billiard pros has brought home only one major title, the World 8-Ball Championship in Las Vegas, Nevada, which he won for the third time last year.

Yet, in "Pool & Billiard Magazine's" monthly On-Line Survey, Reyes, called "The Magician" by Americans, was the fans' No. 1 favorite male player, outvoting multi-titled Johnny Archer, Earl Strickland and Buddy Hall, the three American male players among the survey's top 10 vote-getters.

Allison Fisher, Woman Player of the Year, topped the survey.

The US publication last December asked the sport's fans the question: "As a pool and billiard fan, who was your favorite pro player this year?"

Here are the top 10 vote-getters:

Allison Fisher, England/USA; 2. Efren Reyes, Philippines; 3. Johnny Archer, USA; 4. Jeanette Lee, USA; 5. Earl Strickland, USA; 6. Gerda Hotstatter, Austria/USA; 7. Vivian Villareal, USA; 8. Buddy Hall, USA; 9. Karen Corr, Ireland/USA; 10. Ewa Laurence, Sweden/USA.

A similar survey in 1999 by the Social Weather Station (SWS) adjudged Reyes as the "most admired athlete" in the Philippines.

PBL's marketing potential lauded

BOUYED by the recent success of the Challenge Cup finals between champion Shark and Welcoat Paints, the Philippine Basketball League took another step toward establishing its position as a major basketball product in the country by signing a three-year marketing deal with VideoLine.

The agreement was inked by PBL Chair Dioceldo Sy and PBL Commissioner Chino Trinidad with VideoLine president Tony Carandang, vice president Freddie Ynfante and Noy Firmacion recently.

Carandang, a veteran TV broadcaster with an extensive experience working for ABS-CBN, said the PBL "is one league with great marketing potentials considering the successes it has achieved as a developmental farm for fast-rising future superstars of Philippine basketball."

"What makes the PBL a very marketable league is the youth and vibrance that the league exudes," added Carandang.

VideoLine will provide the marketing inputs to further enhance the PBL as a basketball product. The said marketing company will soon launch the new PBL logo to signal a more revitalized league this season.

"This is another milestone for the PBL. This pact with VideoLine is a solid proof that there are still people who still believe in the marketability of the PBL despite the economic situation the country is in right now," replied Trinidad.

"This is a partnership. We don't talk about numbers. The bottomline here is the fusion of two separate groups working hand-in-hand toward enhancing and intensifying PBL as a basketball product," he added.

Xavier 5 sparkles

XAVIER School's rampaging Stallions made Tiong Lian basketball history Tuesday by dumping UNO High, 65-49, to bag the title with an unprecedented sweep of their 11 games before a jampacked, riotous crowd at the CKS gym.

After holding off their rivals in the first two quarters, 10-9 and 26-18, coach Mon Amador's Stallions unloaded 39 points in the final half to score the lopsided triumph—their third over UNO.

An unexpected spectator, BAP chair Gonzalo "Lito" Puyat II, paid tribute to the Stallions, many of whom he described as "the future of Philippine basketball."

He was particularly impressed with the quarterbacking of Tyrone Tang, the shooting of Chris Tiu and the strong rebounding and timely shot-blocking of Joseph Chua, Sammy Young and Paul Chua.

New sports dome rising in Davao

DAVAO City is staking its claim as a major sports hub and premier convention center in Southern Mindanao by building a P300-million modern multi-purpose facility to be known as the Artica Sports Dome.

Rising on a prime three-hectare lot just 15 minutes from downtown, the Artica Sports Dome is expected to be the main showcase reflecting the city's booming economy, according to city administrator Ernesto Ledesma.

Ledesma said that Davao was recently named by the prestigious newsmagazine Asiaweek as the most liveable city in the Philippines and ranked No. 17 overall in Asia in its latest survey.

He disclosed that under the stewardship of Mayor Benjamin de Guzman, who envisioned the building of the Artica Sports Dome as one his key projects when he assumed office, the city generates P1.5 billion in annual revenues.

"We also receive P1.8 billion from our Internal Revenue Allotment from the national government. So we were able to secure a 10-year loan from the Landbank of the Philippines to build the sports dome without any collateral," Ledesma added.

City Engineer Rolando Uy disclosed that the six-story octagon-shaped Artica Sports Dome has a floor area of 6,500 square meters, a seating capacity of 15,000 and will be fully airconditioned once the building is finished sometime in July.

Ledesma said the need for an ideal venue for hosting basketball games of the big leagues like the PBA, MBA and PBL was one of the reasons why Mayor De Guzman made the construction of a state-of-the art gym one of his 1 5-point programs for the city.

"The common complaint from the PBA, MBA and PBL is that we did not have a large and suitable venue to host their games. The Artica Sports Dome will now address this problem," Ledesma said.

He said they also hope to attract organizers of big conventions, seminars and expositions to consider Davao City as one of their options once the facility is finished to perk up the city's hotel and tourist industry.

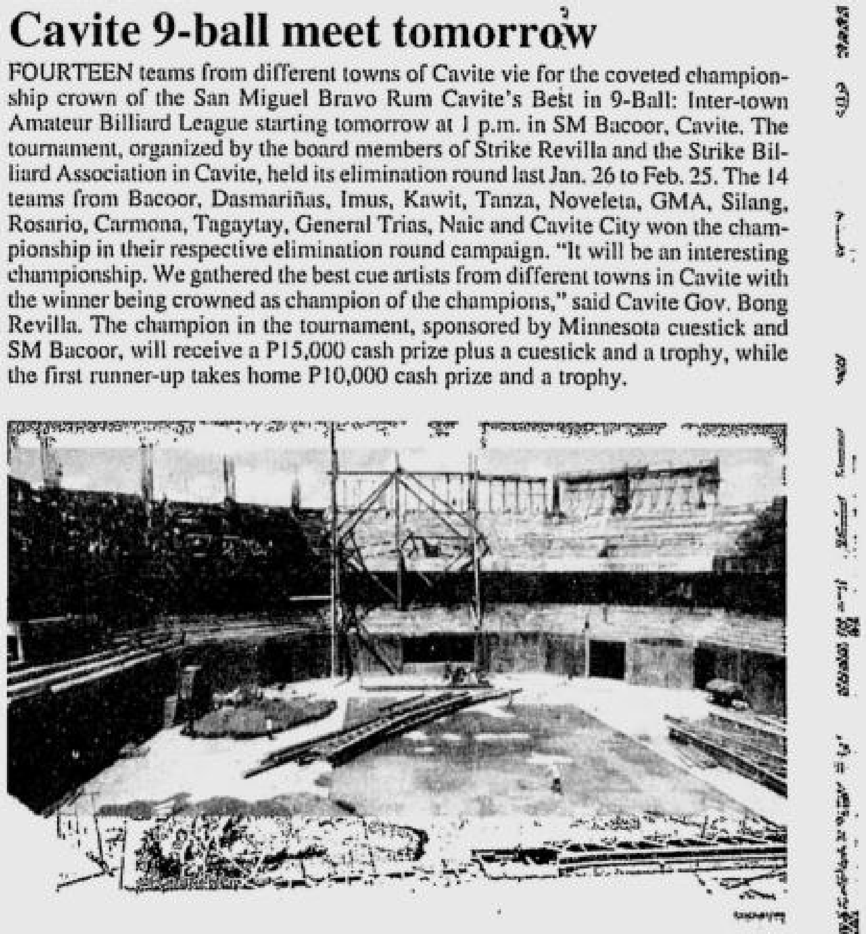
SPORTSWATCH

Mandaluyong derby finals on

THIRTY-TWO qualifiers from a field of 48 entries are gunning for the elusive championship as Mandaluyong Coliseum's highly successful "5th Ucap/BJ Greenwood 6-Cock Derby" final round fires off at 5 p.m. today. Sponsors are Sagupaan Super Feeds and Lakpue Drug Inc. Some 60 encounters are lined up in today's 4-cock event.. Hosts are Ucap president Butch Macasaet and Joey delos Santos. The current leaders, with two points apiece, are Pete Rodriguez (Roadmaster Cobra Balbina), Raymond Velayo and Boy Diaz (Arnis Master II), Gov. Ito Ynares (Binangonan Taytay Combine), Jessie Viceo (San Rafael), Francis Lumunsad (KGB Skyhawk) and Mario Villamor/Tito Reyes (Phoenix TR). Entry fee is P8,800 and minimum bet is P5,500. For inquiries, please contact 747-4797 534-4110, 531-4003 and 531-4005.

Cavite 9-ball meet tomorrow

FOURTEEN teams from different towns of Cavite vie for the coveted championship crown of the San Miguel Bravo Rum Cavite's Best in 9-Ball: Inter-town Amateur Billiard League starting tomorrow at 1 p.m. in SM Bacoor, Cavite. The tournament, organized by the board members of Strike Revilla and the Strike Billiard Association in Cavite, held its elimination round last Jan. 26 to Feb. 25. The 14 teams from Bacoor, Dasmariñas, Imus, Kawit, Tanza, Noveleta, GMA, Silang, Rosario, Carmona, Tagaytay, General Trias, Naic and Cavite City won the championship in their respective elimination round campaign. "It will be an interesting championship. We gathered the best cue artists from different towns in Cavite with the winner being crowned as champion of the champions," said Cavite Gov. Bong Revilla. The champion in the tournament, sponsored by Minnesota cuestick and SM Bacoor, will receive a P15,000 cash prize plus a cuestick and a trophy, while the first runner-up takes home P10,000 cash prize and a trophy.



THE Artica Sports Dome under construction.

Pals lose, set marks

Red Bull nips San Miguel Beer, 78-76

GAMES TOMORROW
(Philsports)
5:15 p.m. – Shell vs Tanduay
7:30 p.m. — Purefoods vs Alaska

By Marc Anthony Reyes

STA. Lucia Realty caught Mobiline in a far worse shape than itself to score a scrambling 71-69 victory last night in the PBA All-Filipino Cup at the Philsports.

Both teams actually played below the league's standards, but the Phone Pals were exceptionally more terrible, setting several all-time records in futility, including the lowest quarter output of two points in the first period.

Mobiline broke the PBA's all-time low score in a quarter (three points) set by Tanduay two years ago aside from turning in the worst shooting percentage in league history (4.8 percent on a 1-of-21 clip) in that period.

Patrick Fran broke the Phone Pals' 11-minute scoreless spell with a medium range jumper that came after 20 consecutive misses.

Mobiline's 20 points in the first half were also the league's seventh worst.

But even against a badly fumbling rival, the Realtors can't straighten things up and had to struggle in the last half to preserve only their second win in six games.

In fairness to the Phone Pals, they didn't wither altogether after that forgettable first half and staged several attempts to get back.

In fact, they twice threatened to tie the score in the second half, the first at 46-44 on Vic Pablo's three-pointer which the forward celebrated by keeping an extra second of follow-through after sinking it in the third

The second one came in the endgame when the Realtors let down their guards thinking the victory was all wrapped up.

Ato Agustin split his charities with three seconds left as Batang Red Bull survived San Miguel Beer's last-ditch rampage for a 78-76 win in the second game.

Agustin's free throws came after the Beermen surged dangerously close (77-76) when Dwight Lago hit a long three-pointer with 15 seconds to go.

But Red Bull showed signs of maturity when, on San Miguel's final offensive after Agustin's free throw, the Thunder hustled in defense, preventing Danny Seigle from making what could have been a game-tying jumper.

The win put the Thunder to a quadruple tie with the Beermen, Shell Velocity and Barangay Ginebra.

STA. LUCIA 71 – Belano 23, Espino 9, Mendoza 8, Aquino 8, Origuerra 7, Adriano 6, Del Rosario 4, Tangkay 2, Orquillas 2, Tan 0.

MOBILINE 69 – Ejercito 15, Pablo 14, Fran 12, Camaso 8, Codinera 6, Ravena 4, Babilonia 4, Demapo 3, Gonzales 2, Cui 1.

Quarters: 17-2, 29-20, 50-44, 71-69.

RED BULL 78--Briones 21, Valenzuela 14, Harp 13, Raymundo 12, Reyes 8, Miller 5, Agustin 3, Mendoza 2, Tugade 0.

SAN MIGUEL 76--Seigle 24, Lago 12, Belasco 10, Ildefonso 10, Racela 10, Victoria 6, Gamboa 2, Duat 2, Abuda 0.

Quarters: 20-16, 38-36, 54-51, 78-76

RP champ overweight

By Recah Trinidad

PICHIT, Thailand—Fight fans in this arid, far-flung province yesterday gleefully welcomed reports that World Boxing Council flyweight champion Malcolm Tunacao of the Philippines was eight pounds over the limit during the trial weigh-in in Bangkok on Monday.

There were excited suggestions Tunacao, who makes a second defense of his title against Pongsaklek Wongjongkam on Friday, could suffer a similar fate that befell Filipino ring sensation Manny Pacquiao who also lost his WBC crown in a Thai province.

Just like Pacquiao, it was noted that Tunacao is also making his second crown defense. Both of them are lefthanders.

But the most unnerving likeness involves excess poundage.

Tunacao left Manila last week weighing only 115 pounds, three over the 112 pound flyweight limit. His chief handler, Rex Wakee Salud, was however aghast when told that the world champ hit 120, eight over the flyweight standard on Monday.

Trainer Brix Flores explained that Tunacao had eaten a full meal before the trial weigh-in. But Salud took no chances and ordered a stricter regimen for his fighter.

True enough, Tunacao, who worked out and cut down on food intake, checked in at 115 pounds, only three over, yesterday.

The official weigh-in is scheduled this afternoon at the Rose Inn Hotel, the champ's official quarters here.

Tunacao said he feels a lot better than when he took the WBC flyweight crown from Medgoen 3-K Battery in Udon Thani last May.

Medgoen was the same fighter who had stopped and dethroned Pacquiao.

Tunacao told the Inquirer he was confident of making the official weigh-in try.

The title bout, to be held in an open-air arena, will be officiated by Jae Bong Kim of Korea. The judges are Dalby Shirley (USA), Gus Mercurio (Australia) and Koda Kamasaki (Japan).

Racing shelved due to disease

LONDON —All horse racing in Britain and Ireland was suspended and a major international rugby match in Wales was called off because of the fast spreading outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease.

A number of sports events have been threatened by the outbreak of at least 17 separate cases of the highly contagious livestock ailment in England and Wales.

The Six Nations rugby union match on Saturday between Wales and Ireland in Cardiff was scrapped.

The decision was announced Tuesday night after talks between the Irish government, Irish Rugby Football Union, Welsh rugby administrators and Six Nations organizers.

With 15,000 Irish fans planning to travel to the game at Millennium Stadium, the Irish government feared fans might bring the disease home.

Six Nations organizers said the match would be rescheduled for late April or early May _ weeks after the scheduled end of the season.

Saturday's other two games, England vs. Scotland at Twickenham in London and Italy vs. France in Rome, will go ahead.

But the status of the entire Six Nations championship could be in doubt. The tournament had been scheduled to end April 8.

Any games involving the movement of fans in and out of England and Wales could now be in jeopardy.

Although foot and mouth rarely affects humans, the disease can be transmitted via footwear if people come into contact with it.

The Jockey Club, which runs horse racing in England, announced that racing would be suspended for at least seven days until March 7.

Foot-and-mouth disease almost never infects humans, but it is highly contagious among cloven-footed animals like sheep, cows and pigs. It is not usually fatal in itself, but causes blisters on the mouth and feet, fever and loss of appetite. *AP*

RACING TIPS

AT SAN LAZARO BY MR. 999

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Race 2—1. Burning Heart 2. Banahaw Blues 3. Join the Fun 4. Affectionate

Race 3—1. Maria Nevada 2. Gold and Dollar 3. Shining Jo

Race 4—1. Tumataginting 2. Allusion 3. Pep Talk 4. Silent Wind

Race 5—1. Sham Sham 2. Spoiler 3. Strong Bird

Race 6—1. Pretty Pleasing 2. Aringkingking 3. Wan Star/Royal Harvest 4. Clear Juice

Race 7—1. Bari Bari 2. High Pitch 3. Ladies Night 4. Private Asset

Race 8—1. Native Talent 2. Mark's Treasure 3. Silver Gray 4. Great Debate

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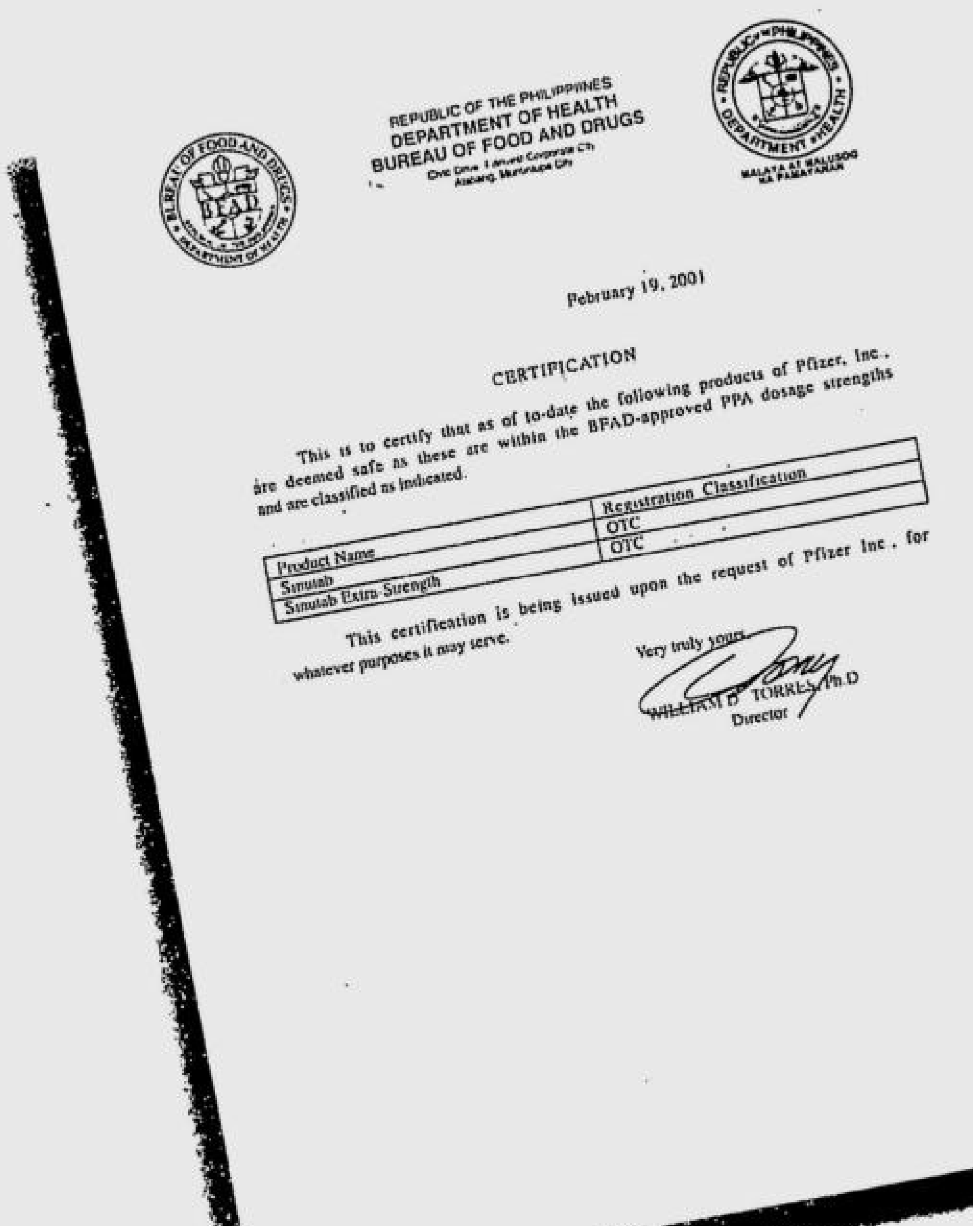

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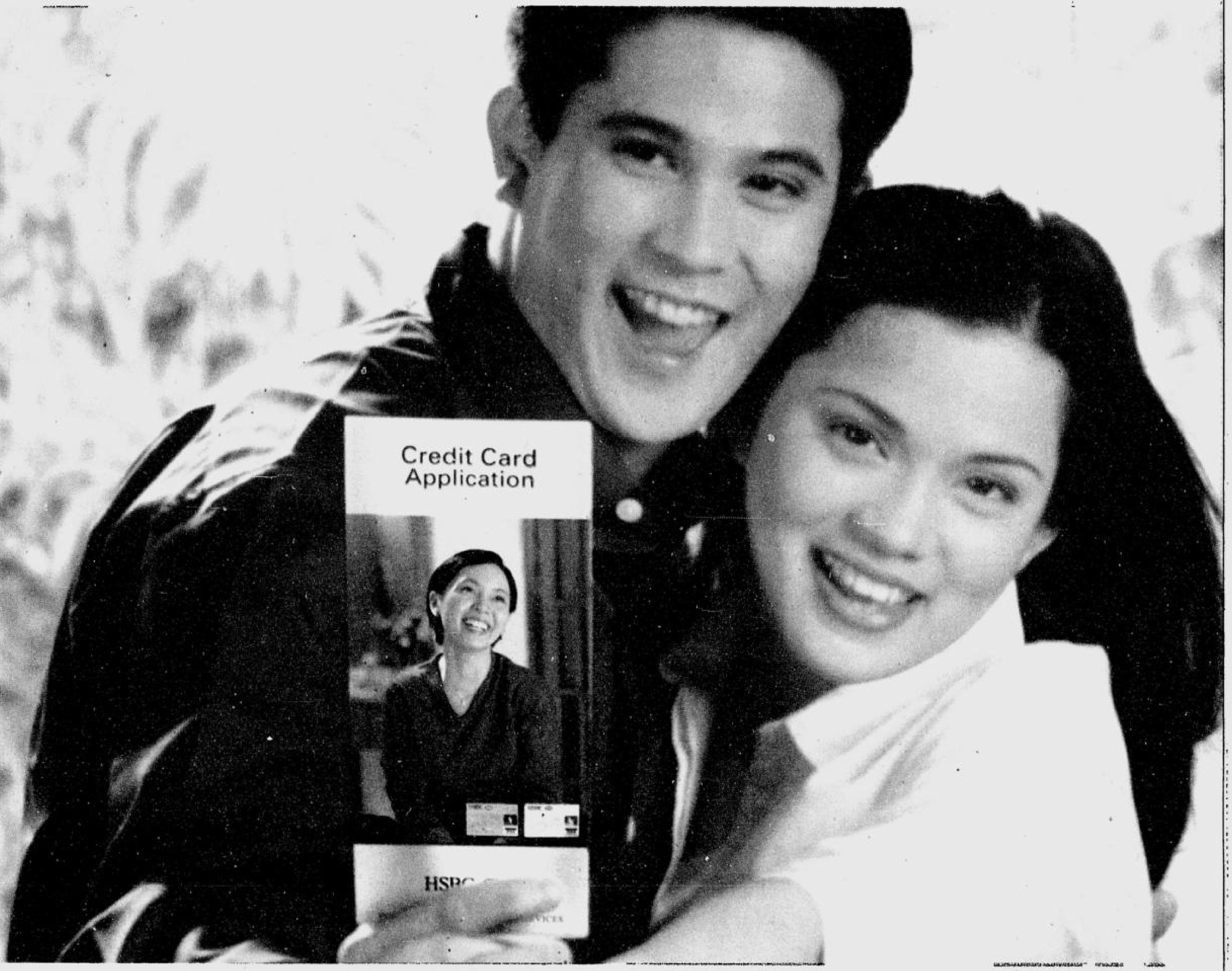

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METRO

LOUIE C. CAMINO, Editor

9 cops sacked for hazing

BY VOLT CONTRERAS

IMAGINE mixing rubbing alcohol, pain-killer liniment, crushed chili, pepper and soy sauce. Now pour that stinging mix on a man's genitals.

That was allegedly what three rookie policemen went through in the hands of nine instructors when they attended training for the Special Action Force in Fort Santo Domingo in Sta. Rosa, Laguna.

Interior Secretary Jose Lina learned of this alleged cruelty and yesterday ordered the immediate relief of the nine SAF instructors.

Lina identified the nine men as PO2s Randolph Magallanes, Eric Nilado, and Joseph Pepito; PO1s Pepito Tabios, Ernesto Bautista, and Rodolfo Justo; and others known only as PO2 Angling, PO2 Araneta and PO1 Paunel.

The instructors are facing criminal charges before a Sta. Rosa court for violating the anti-hazing law.

The complainants were SAF trainees PO1 Ariel Dolor of Hernandez Street, Tondo, Manila; PO1 Conrado Aniel of Masinag Street, also of Tondo; and PO1 Joselito Lantano of Nadurata Street, Grace Park, Caloocan City.

The complainants sought Lina's help on Monday and claimed that the alleged hazing began on Feb. 23, their first day of training.

The complainants said they and their fellow trainees suffered throughout the entire course.

They said they were made to run through four "stations," and at each station, they were allegedly ordered to "roll over like a barrel" while their instructors alternately beat or kick them.

One complainant recalled how at one station, his eyes were rubbed with "crushed chili" and his genitals doused with the concoction which the officers introduced as "SAF wine."

And in between they were severely beaten, the complainants added.

Gun ban nets 32 arrests

BY JEROME ANING

A TOTAL of 32 violators of the election gun ban, including a policeman and an Army soldier, are facing charges before the

GUN BAN/ A20

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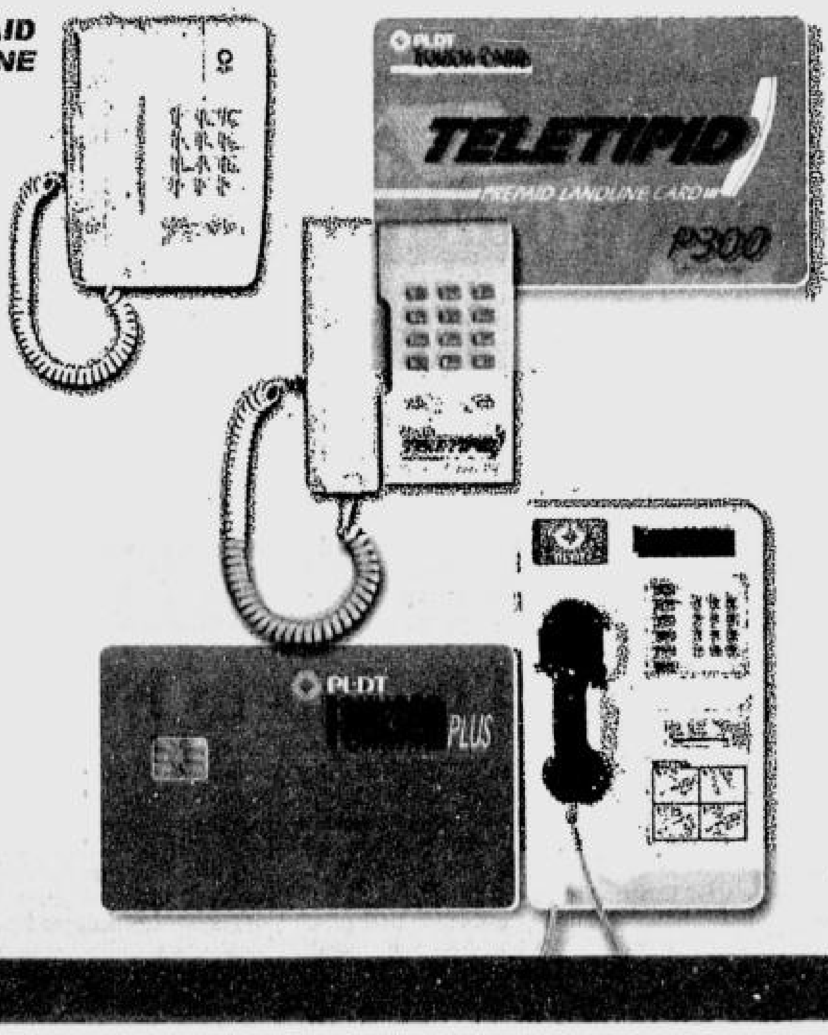

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JOEY @ 92.3 Rhythms FM METRO MANILA
who your radio should be.

SLEX users want their money back

By Alcuin Papa

SLEX

GIVE us our money back.

A group of Laguna residents yesterday made this call to Citra, the company that manages the South Luzon Expressway.

Ray Junia, of the Movement for Responsible Enterprise, a group of professionals based in San Pedro, Laguna, called on Citra to refund the fees they have paid in the past two years, saying the company has not fulfilled its promises to improve the traffic situation along the SLEX.

"In effect, we have been overpaying them (Citra) but we have been shortchanged," Junia said. "We have documents to prove their pledges."

He said Citra first made the promise to improve travel time on the SLEX in 1999 when it first raised its toll rates.

From the Nichols tollgate to the Southwoods gate, Citra used to charge P5, he pointed out. When Citra decided to construct the Skyway in 1999, it also raised the toll from P5 to P25.

"We all complained," Junia said. "But Citra justified the first increase because they promised to improve travel time, especially with the Skyway.

"But this has not happened," he stressed. "They have not delivered. In reality, nothing was improved because you still get stuck in traffic. On this basis, we are asking for a refund."

He said the refund could come in the form of cash rebates on toll rates.

Junia added that his group asked for the refund when they recently submitted their answer to a Citra petition filed before the Toll Regulatory Board for a 300-percent increase on their fees.

Last December, Citra submitted a petition to the TRB for an increase from P22.50 to P75 from Magallanes to Alabang.

The TRB has yet to rule on the petition.

Various groups, motorists and the local governments of Muntinlupa and Parañaque have voiced their opposition to the planned increase.

Citra justified the increase, saying it needs the money to service its foreign loans and adjust to the peso devaluation.

Junia's group rejected Citra's justification. Junia said motorists should get "value for value" given the traffic situation on the SLEX.

"That is their business," he said. "We pay them to use the SLEX and not to pay for their loans. Is it our fault that the dollar rose against the peso?"

Cop caught taking P50 from Pasay gambling operator

SPO3 Reynaldo Monforte reportedly threw his career away for P50—the amount the policeman was allegedly caught receiving from an illegal gambling operator in Pasay City Tuesday night.

Monforte, 50, of Upper Bicutan, Taguig, was charged with extortion yesterday before the Pasay City Prosecutor's Office.

Southern Police District director Chief Supt. Manuel Cabigon said Monforte was arrested after he was caught receiving P50 from a "sakla" operator during a funeral wake on M. dela Cruz corner Valerio streets, Pasay City at about 11:30 p.m. Tuesday.

"(Monforte) was not aware that I ordered a close monitoring of his illegal activities after complaints against him flooded my office," Cabigon said.

But the arresting officers failed to catch the gamblers, who fled as Monforte was taken into custody.

Monforte, assigned to Pasay Police Station 2, was allegedly still in uniform when he was collared.

Police said the suspect was operating outside his precinct's jurisdiction.

Lawmen seized from Monforte the P50 bill he was allegedly bribed with, his 9-mm Beretta pistol and 13 rounds of ammunition.

Monforte, who posted P10,000 bail, refused to make a comment.

Agnes E. Donato

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Thursday, March 1, 2000
Thursday after Ash Wednesday

1st Reading: Dt 30:15-20
Gospel: Lk 9:22-25

Jesus said, "The Son of Man must suffer many things. He will be rejected by the elders and chief priests and teachers of the Law, and put to death. Then after three days he will be raised to life."

Jesus also said to all the people, "If you wish be a follower of mine, deny yourself and take up your cross each day, and follow me. For if you choose to save your life, you will lose it, and if you lose your life for my sake, you will save it. What does it profit you to gain the whole world while you destroy or damage yourself?"

Commentary

Commitment to anything or to anybody demands a free and voluntary self-giving even to the point of self-sacrifice. There is no other way to show our dedication to God and the Lord's cause but an enlightened and right decision to be true to our covenant made in baptism. During Lent we are reminded of our calling to be followers of Jesus, who was faithful to his mission unto death. Such covenant fidelity is within our reach if we open ourselves to the mystery of Christian discipleship. Today, we can truly mortify our selfish desires in favor of God's glory and others' wellbeing, especially of the poor.

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SUPREME COURT DOCTRINES

CRIMINAL LAW (CRIMES AGAINST PROPERTY)—Robbery with homicide—In robbery with homicide, the prosecution must prove the following elements: (1) the taking of personal property with the use of violence or intimidation against a person; (2) the property thus taken belongs to another; (3) the taking is characterized by *animus lucrandi*; and (4) on the occasion of the robbery or by reason thereof, the crime of homicide, as used in its generic sense, was committed. In robbery with homicide, the principal purpose of the accused must be shown to be to commit robbery, the homicide being committed either by reason of, or on occasion of the robbery. The homicide may precede or occur after the robbery. What is essential is that there is a nexus, an intimate connection between robbery and the killing, whether the latter be prior or subsequent to the former, or whether both crimes be committed at the same time. [Citations omitted.] [Justice Quisumbing, Second Division, People v. Barreta, G.R. No. 120367, October 16, 2000]

DIGEST BY R.B. VERA

BUKSAN ANG URBAN
NGAYON NA!
URBAN DEPOSITORS FORUM
URBAN BANK
DEPOSITORS' FORUM

ERIK ARAZAS

OPENING CALL

Depositors and employees of Urban Bank, which was closed by the government last year, rally in front of the bank's main building on Gil Puyat Avenue (Buendia) in Makati City to demand the reopening of Urban. Running priest Robert Reyes joined the rally, during which palm leaves were burned in a symbolic "cleansing of the banking industry."

AFP race: Air Force chief is dark horse

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

NOW that Lt. Gen. Edgardo Espinosa is out of the race for Armed Forces chief of staff, the fight is now between Lt. Gen. Diomedio Villanueva, Philippine Army chief, and Lt. Gen. Jaime delos Santos, AFP deputy chief of staff. Espinosa is being groomed to become the country's de facto ambassador to Taiwan.

Delos Santos, who headed the Philippine contingent to East Timor, is reportedly the better choice than Villanueva.

Villanueva has been linked to irregular money transactions when he was still commander of the Southern Command. He reportedly incurred a big amount of unliquidated cash advances. Villanueva is also said to be a heavy drinker that it has affected his behavior and decision-making process.

***

President Macapagal, AFP's commander in chief, has a third alternative for the chief of staff: Air Force chief Lt. Gen. Benjamin Defensor.

Defensor, a member of the Philippine Military Academy (PMA) Class 1969, is an intellectual. He authored the Air Force strategic plan and modernization program, which became the model for similar plans of the AFP. For this, he earned the Outstanding Achievement Medal.

In 1974, Defensor made history in the AFP when he earned two Gold Cross medals, the highest combat award at that time, within 24 hours of continuous operations in Jolo, Sulu.

His downside is that he is the younger brother of opposition Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago.

***

Onion-skinned Chief Supt. Reynor Gonzales, former chief of the PNP Narcotics Group, is probably moping in a corner nowadays over the dismissal of a libel case he filed against this columnist.

In dismissing the libel case, Quezon City Assistant Prosecutor Elizabeth G. Flores-Pagdilao said the words and phrases that I used in criticizing Gonzales were not libelous since I did not know the former Narcgroup personally.

This was how I lambasted Gonzales in this space on June 13, 2000:

"P@3$%^& kayo sa Narcgroup! You consider beating up a helpless woman who has not committed any crime a minor offense?

"And dear, readers, Colonel Gonzales *(he was a colonel at the time—RT)* defended the one-month suspension order of his nephew! He said that the offense called for a light penalty.

"*Alam mo, padre, hindi ka lang kunsentidor, gago ka pa*! No wonder many citizens are either giving aid and comfort to the New People's Army (NPA) or joining the rebel movement because of police officers like you."

Prosecutor Pagdilao—bless her soul! - said that my use of the words "gago" and "kunsentidor" were an expression of anger and disgust because Gonzales defended the imposition of a very light penalty on his nephew for what I perceived to be a grave misconduct for a policeman.

Anyway, I know who ordered Gonzales, who's allegedly *bobo*, to file the libel case against me: then PNP chief Panfilo Lacson with whom I've had a tiff.

Thank you, Ms Pagdilao, for upholding press freedom !

***

Only two dozen people greeted Erap in Zamboanga City when he went there to campaign for opposition senatorial candidates led by his wife, Loi Ejercito. The supporters who met him at the airport were even outnumbered by reporters.

Mayor Ma. Clara Lobregat and her son, Rep. Celso Lobregat, were not at the airport to meet Erap. Estrada dumped his long-time and once faithful friend, Zamboanga City multi-millionaire Lepeng Wee, in favor of the Lobregats. Wee and the Lobregats are political enemies.

If Wee were still in Erap's favor, the former president and his entourage would have received a big welcome from Zamboangueños who are supporting the businessman's mayoral bet.

When he was still in power, Erap didn't know his real friends. He probably was too drunk with power and red wine.

Erap abandoned Wee, his No. 1 supporter in Zamboanga City during the 1998 presidential election, because he allegedly feared losing the support of the Lobregats. But where are the Lobregats now that he's out of power?

Wee is said to be giving the older Lobregat, who's running for reelection, a run for her money. According to surveys, the businessman, a newcomer in politics, is way ahead of the 82-year-old mayor.

***

Goings-on at the Public Estate Authority (PEA) put to a test Gloria Macapagal's commitment to do away with cronyism in government.

PEA workers fear the controversy-laden agency's manager, Carlos Doble, an appointee of ex-president Erap, would retain his post. He allegedly brags about his supposed close ties with First Gentleman Mike Arroyo.

In a letter of appeal to President Macapagal, the workers complained that it was Doble who allegedly diverted early last year P500 million PEA funds to Malacañang, purportedly to prop up Estrada's cash-strapped administration. The fund diversion resulted in the discontinuance of employees' bonuses and allowances.

They also cited Doble's pending case before the Ombudsman for violation of the anti-graft and corrupt practices law, in relation to the termination of contracts and demolition of structures made under the previous administration.

Is Mike Arroyo really in on this, or is his name being unduly dragged in the case?

GARBAGE DISPOSAL

Caloocan Mayor Rey Malonzo (in white) shows Metro Manila Development Authority Chair Benjamin Abalos (background, right) the city's compost pit that has been set up in front of the city hall to promote composting among residents. Trash from the wet market and other food wastes are put in the compost pit.

Learning styles meeting starts

DR. Rita Dunn, executive director of the International Learning Styles Network based at St. John's University in New York, is in the country to lead the speakers in the second national education conference on "Creating an Enhanced Learning Environment Through Individual Learning Styles" today and tomorrow at the Philippine Trade Training Center on Roxas Boulevard in Pasay City.

This was announced by Henry S. Tenedero, president of the Center for Learning and Teaching Styles Philippines (CLTS) and organizer of the event.

Haydee B. Yorac, who chairs the conference, said the participants will learn how to identify and expand their unique learning styles characteristics; design and use specific strategies to respond to varied learning styles; redesign conventional classroom to respond to learning style differences; and to teach students to teach themselves.

Interested parties may call 374-4967, 631-6535, 931-6276 or 633-4864.

Abandoned woman burns slum

By Christian V. Esguerra

ABANDONED by her husband and children, a woman on Tuesday allegedly started a fire that razed a squatter colony in Malabon, police said.

Police yesterday arrested Mary Jane San Jose, 25, of Atis Road, Barangay Potrero, Malabon, whom witnesses identified as the one who started the two-hour blaze that gutted at least 30 houses in her neighborhood and damaged around P3 million in property.

No one was reported injured in the fire.

Authorities believed that San Jose started the fire after her husband reportedly left her, taking with him their children.

Witness Noel Indic, 18, told fire investigators that San Jose immediately fled after burning the house of her neighbor Sonny Penaflor at about 2 p.m. on Tuesday.

The fire then spread throughout the congested slum area, razing houses, most of which were made of scrap wood and recycled galvanized iron sheets.

Firefighters and volunteers from Malabon and nearby areas took at least two hours to control the blaze.

Residents salvaged what they could from their burning homes, cluttering the narrow streets with furniture and appliances.

Indic told authorities that San Jose returned to the area at about 8 p.m. that day. The witness sought the assistance of barangay watchmen to arrest the suspected arsonist.

San Jose is detained at the Malabon police headquarters.

FEU student killed by bus in Ermita

AN 18-YEAR-OLD college student was killed after being hit by a speeding bus while crossing Taft Avenue in Ermita, Manila early Tuesday evening.

Marian Rivera, single, a sophomore at the Far Eastern University and resident of Otis Street, Paco, Manila, died while undergoing treatment at the Philippine General Hospital.

Rivera was hit by a Makati City-bound PVP Liner bus (NXL-295) driven by Lito Fontanilla while she was crossing Taft at the corner of United Nations Avenue around 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, said SPO1 Mario Jorge of the Western Traffic Enforcement Office.

Fontanilla, 33, married and a resident of Pasig Line, Sta. Ana, said Rivera crossed the road while the green light for south-bound vehicles was on.

But witnesses interviewed by SPO1 Jorge countered that Fontanilla was racing with another bus.

The impact threw Rivera against an LRT post, fracturing her skull and compounding her bone injuries.

Fontanilla is detained at traffic police headquarters in Port Area, Manila and will be charged with reckless imprudence resulting in homicide. *Jerome Aning*

Gun ban...

(From page A19)

court, Western Police District (WPD) director Chief Supt. Avelino Razon Jr. said yesterday.

Police seized from the suspects eight .38- handguns, seven .45 guns, a .22 pistol, a .9mm pistol, a 12-gauge shotgun, two hand grenades and 52 pieces of live ammunition, since Jan. 2.

Razon, the commanders of WPD's 11 stations and other top police officials met on Monday with Manila's six election officers to discuss ways to speed up the disposition of the gun ban cases, including the accomplishment of affidavits of arrest.

The gun ban will end on June 13. Police have said there would be no letup in their campaign to implement the election gun ban.

Present in the two-hour conference were the election chiefs of the city's six districts: Rodolfo Melon, Francisco Rosal Jr., Aniceta Laceda, Rhodora Aquino, Lea Alarkon and Rosalinda Albia-Radin.

Several station chiefs complained that some of their men have a hard time in ascertaining the authenticity of the gun ban exemption certificates presented to them as the papers contained only the type of firearm and not the names of the people who are given exemptions.

Melon promised to furnish the WPD with the names of all the people who were given exemptions.

Elevator pins old woman to death

By Jerome Aning

A 60-YEAR-OLD food vendor died from injuries she suffered during a bizarre elevator accident in the Office of the Ombudsman building in Ermita, Manila on Tuesday afternoon.

Lucila Boloto, a resident of Legarda Street, Sampaloc, suffered a broken spine and died at the Medical Center Manila around 4 p.m. Tuesday.

Detectives Alfredo Salazar and Anthony Galang of the city police's homicide section said Boloto was on her way to the third floor to collect payment and deliver late lunch packs to the employees when the accident took place around 1 p.m.

The old elevator coach was halfway between the first and second floors when it got stuck for a still unexplained reason. Witnesses said the frightened Boloto tried to get out and managed to open the elevator doors wide enough for her to squeeze through.

But the elevator suddenly started moving up again. The doors pinned Boloto, whose lower body was still inside the elevator.

Witnesses said the old woman screamed and passed out. Concerned employees brought her to the hospital.

Police are trying to determine who is liable for the tragedy. They recommended that the elevator be shut down and be repaired.

'14 K shabu' seized in condo

PASAY City police on Tuesday seized four and a half kilograms of high-grade shabu believed to be belonging to the notorious 14K international syndicate in a raid on a posh condominium in Pasay City.

A team of the Pasay Police Criminal Investigation Division headed by Senior Insp. Reynaldo Baral and Drug Enforcement Unit under Chief Insp. Rodolfo Llorca raided the Somerset Condominium at the corner of Leveriza and Balagtas streets at around 4:30 p.m. Thursday.

The raiders said the drugs were found inside an electrical circuit breaker on the building's sixth floor.

The building is said to be owned by Filipino-Chinese real estate magnate Emilio Ching.

Last Dec. 26, agents of the National Bureau of Investigation raided the same building and found 300 kilos of shabu inside.

Baral told the **Inquirer** that in the first week of January, he received information about the drugs which were said to be leftovers from the NBI raid. Baral said he immediately asked a police asset to monitor the movements of the suspects.

When the asset said the police would be able to catch the owners of the drugs, the police group closed in.

The suspects, however, apparently spotted the policemen talking to the building's security chief and they escaped.

Baral said their investigation showed that the 14K group owned the drugs and was distributing them to different points nationwide.

Investigators are continuing their search for the suspects. *Alcuin Papa*

Pedicab man killed by his passengers

A PEDICAB driver was clubbed and shot dead by three passengers with whom he earlier quarreled over the fare in Pandacan, Manila yesterday morning, police said.

Martin Canlas, 25, married and a resident of Eusebio Street, Pandacan, suffered a bullet wound in the chest and later died at the Philippine General Hospital, said SPO3 Edgardo Ko of the city police's homicide section.

Canlas was reportedly queuing with his fellow drivers on N. Zamora Street and Quirino Avenue when the unidentified men approached him at around 4 a.m.

Witnesses overheard one of the men asking the pedicab driver in Tagalog, "Were you the one we rode going to Quirino?"

When Canlas answered yes, the men accused him of overcharging them.

When the pedicab driver reacted angrily, one of the men drew a small revolver and fired at Canlas.

The bleeding victim ran toward a nearby store but the gunmen caught up with him and beat him with metal pipes.

Police were looking for the suspects, who were described as between 18 and 23 years old and said to be under the influence of drugs.

Ara Mina's dad out of mayor's race

THE SON of Quezon City Mayor Ismael Mathay Jr. yesterday backed out from the mayoral race in the city, virtually reducing the race between administration candidate House Speaker Feliciano Belmonte and action star Rudy Fernandez.

But Chuck Mathay would be running instead for the congressional seat in the city's District II, and the older Mathay would be seeking a House seat for District IV.

With one foe less to beat, Belmonte, who filed his candidacy yesterday afternoon, told reporters that he feels he's the underdog even if his popularity rose during the impeachment trial of Estrada. Last month, Belmonte also rose to the leadership of the House.

The Mathays announced their political plans earlier yesterday with the mayor addressing city hall employees.

"It is now the time for the people of Quezon City to choose a new leader," the older Mathay said.

The son said he opted to run for congressman "to seek vindication" in his district which, in the last local elections, saw his defeat against Rep. Dante Liban.

Liban is serving his last term as congressman and was earlier rumored to be gunning for the city's mayoral seat.

Between 5,000 and 7,000 Belmonte supporters accompanied their leader to the city's Comelec office in an early afternoon march that started at the Sacred Heart Parish in Barangay Kamuning.

"I'm not running against someone but running for something, and that is good governance," said Belmonte, whose campaign is expected to capitalize on his being one of the 11 House prosecutors during Estrada's impeachment trial.

Four more are said to be aspiring for the city's top post as of yesterday, the Comelec deadline for the filing of candidacies. They are Benjamin Samson, Florian Alvarez, Romeo Mercado, and Andres Co.

ERIK ARAZAS

LIMELIGHT ON LIM

Former Interior Secretary Alfredo Lim files his certificate of candidacy at the Commission on Elections in Intramuros. Lim, who was mayor of Manila once before, is running for the city's top post again.

BAGATSING AND LACUNA

Former congressman Amado Bagatsing files his own certificate of candidacy for Manila mayor, together with his running mate, Vice Mayor Danilo Lacuna (left).

It's showtime in Caloocan City!

By Christian V. Esguerra

CALOOCAN City would be the battleground for a long-running feud between two fierce political rivals in the May elections.

Already, the fight between reelectionist Mayor Reynaldo Malonzo, former movie actor, and the brothers Asistio, longtime politicians, has officially begun.

Yesterday, Malonzo, who is gunning for his third straight term as mayor, accused the brothers of dividing the city's votes by hatching a supposed electoral family feud between them in what the mayor called a desperate attempt to win against his "formidable" ticket.

Malonzo said that former Mayor Macario "Boy" Asistio Jr. and his younger brother Rep. Luis "Baby" Asistio have made it appear they are fighting each other by running under opposing tickets.

"I've already expected this political ploy," Malonzo told the **Inquirer**. "They want to divide the votes, thinking they could win over my 'champion team.'"

Boy Asistio is running for District II congressman under the Liping Kalookan party. His brother Baby is going against Malonzo in the mayoral race under the Nationalist People's Coalition.

But the older Asistio had said he would not have run if his brother had not included in his ticket his political enemies.

The younger Asistio has fielded Councilor Chito Abel against his brother in the congressional race.

Malonzo has warned supporters of the Asistios that the brothers are only using them as fall guys in their "Machiavellian (style) politics."

"Blood is thicker than water," Malonzo said.

"For sure, Baby will be supporting his brother over Abel in the congressional race. He's just using people like Abel to do a wrecking job on me. Afterward, they'll be left out in the cold."

But Rep. Asistio countered that "it's not in my character to abandon a friend. I support him till the end."

He said the biggest problem of Caloocan is garbage, but Malonzo stinks the most amid the city's trash.

"I don't want to highlight people like him," Rep. Asistio added.

The city would also be the backdrop for show biz personalities who would try to outshine one another. It could also give a former sports personality the home court advantage.

Roberto "Bobby" Guanzon, former congressman and broadcast personality, is Rep. Asistio's runningmate. Malonzo has tapped former basketball player and referee Councilor Luis "Tito" Varela as his bet for vice mayor.

Malonzo's ticket includes veteran activist Nathanael Santiago who is bidding for a seat in the city council, and Councilor Dennis Padilla, a comedian, who is gunning for a second straight term.

Rep. Enrico Echiverri of District I, a member of the Lower House's "Spice Boys," is seeking reelection.

Rep. Asistio has his share of show biz personalities in the person of singer April "Bingo" Regino, who is running for councilor.

The lone congressional seat in the Malabon-Navotas district is said to be contested by reelectionist Ricky Sandoval, a member of the Spice Boys, and lawyer Rissa Oreta, eldest daughter of Sen. Tessie Aquino-Oreta.

Incumbent Malabon Mayor Amado Vicencio, a staunch supporter of ousted President Estrada, is eyeing another term against newcomer Flery Marcelo of Lakas.

"Terror" policeman Alfonso "Boyong" Mañalac is in Vicencio's lineup for the municipal council.

In Valenzuela City, Magtanggol Gunigundo, former chair of the Presidential Commission on Good Government, is running for District I congressman. His son Magi, another Spice Boy, is eyeing another term in the second district against former city budget officer Arsenio Mayo.

The mayoral race is between reelectionist Emmanuel "Bobbit" Carlos and engineer Eliseo Demafelis, the Gunigundos' bet.

Phillip: I won't run if I don't know anything

By Leah Salterio

ACTION star Phillip Salvador yesterday filed his candidacy for Mandaluyong vice mayor despite stinging criticism from incumbent Mayor Benhur Abalos that he lacks the capacity to rule.

Salvador yesterday took a fighting stance and lashed out with his own fiery rebuttal, speaking mostly in Filipino.

"If I don't know anything about parliamentary procedures, I will not run for office," he told the **Inquirer** in a phone interview. "I have been with the masses for the longest time so I would know better what their complaints and needs are.

"There are politicians who know a lot about the laws, but they don't give priority to the needs of the people and they cannot offer solutions to the problems of the people.

"They make laws but not for the benefit of the majority. I will not talk this way if I don't know anything. I believe I understand politics and I'm capable to serve."

Salvador said show biz stars should not be looked down upon. He insisted that not only doctors, engineers, lawyers and other such professionals are qualified to run for public office.

"(Being movie stars) does not mean that we don't have capacity to serve the people," he said. "I know how to spell, how to read and more important, I help people without expecting anything in return. It's service that comes from the heart. And that's my edge over traditional politicians."

Earlier, Salvador was also compared to disgraced President Estrada, whose extra-marital affairs were said to have affected his governance. Salvador is also known to have several children by several women.

But Salvador countered that his life has always been an open book since he entered show business.

He appealed to his detractors to stop raking personal issues against him.

Salvador's presence in birthday parties and wakes of Mandaluyong residents had been referred to as his style of trying to endear himself to the people and eventually get their votes. But Salvador insisted it's the people of Mandaluyong who prodded him to run.

"They were practically begging me to run, so whatever happens, I will give them priority," he said. "How can you say no to these people when you are faced with the reality of life in our city?"

Abalos Sr. leads son's supporters

MANDALUYONG City Mayor Benhur Abalos yesterday led the Lakas-NUCD ticket as he made formal his candidacy before the local Commission on Elections.

Abalos, who is seeking reelection, was accompanied by his running mate, Vice Mayor Jesse Cruz, and other partymates.

Abalos' father, former mayor and current Metro Manila Development Authority chair Benjamin Abalos Sr., led Mandaluyong residents and civic groups in a show of support for the ticket.

Rep. Neptali Gonzales Jr. is also seeking reelection to represent Mandaluyong in Congress.

Running for councilor under the administration party are Aida David, Danilo de Guzman, Epifanio de Guzman, Luisito Espinosa, Generoso Nuguit, and Teresita Pillas for District 1.

For District 2, the candidates are Darius Apacionado, Cesar Bartolome, Narciso Bernardo, Roberto "Titus" Francisco, Cherry Lun Pablo-Santos, and Renato Sta. Maria.

The Abalos-Cruz tandem will run against the candidates of the Partido ng Masang Pilipino, led by Bibot Domingo and actor Phillip Salvador.

Agnes E. Donato

Gonzalez vs Zamora in SJ

THE UNITED Opposition on Tuesday presented the candidates who would challenge deposed President Estrada's hold on San Juan in the May elections.

Reelectionist Rep. Jose Mari Gonzalez led the group composed of former San Juan Mayor Aldolfo Sto. Domingo, Baby San Pascual, and 12 councilors, including Gonzalez's wife Charito.

Gonzalez would be up against former Executive Secretary Ronaldo Zamora for the congressional seat, while Sto. Domingo would be facing Jose Victor "JV" Ejercito for the mayoralty.

During the party launch at Club Filipino in San Juan, Gonzalez jumped the gun when he noted that his opponent would be using against him the incident at Congress where Gonzalez slapped a House official shortly after the impeachment complaint was passed.

Gonzalez then tried to clear his person, saying that issue was a thing of the past.

"I admit that I made a mistake and have already apologized for it," he said. "*Mainit lang talaga ang ulo ko noon kaya ko 'yon nagawa* (I was really angry at the time that's why I did it)."

Gonzalez promised not to do it again.

He also said the House ethics committee had already exonerated him.

In a statement, Sto. Domingo maintained that Gonzalez was the most viable bet against Estrada's candidates. *Agnes E. Donato*

Mel Lopez gives way to Dondon

By Jerome Aning

FORMER Manila Mayor Gemiliano "Mel" Lopez formally gave way yesterday to ex-congressman Amado "Dondon" Bagatsing as the official Manila mayoral candidate of the People Power Coalition in the May elections.

In a press conference held yesterday at the Barrio Fiesta restaurant in Ermita to mark the launching of Bagatsing's candidacy, Lopez pledged "full support" for Bagatsing and other PPC candidates running for various local posts in Manila.

Earlier, Lopez and Bagatsing each claimed to be the official PPC candidate, causing concerns that the administration's chances of winning control of the Manila government would be reduced should both decide to run for mayor.

"I cannot allow myself to be used as an instrument of divisiveness among my party members as this would cut our chances of winning," said Lopez.

A gleeful Bagatsing said he was relieved over Lopez's decision to withdraw as the PPC candidate, saying this would consolidate the coalition's voting base and improve their chances of winning City Hall. Bagatsing was earlier named the PPC candidate in Manila by Finance Secretary Alberto Romulo, the coalition's coordinator.

Lopez, who said he still has the support of his party Lakas-NUCD, would reportedly be seeking a seat in the House of Representatives for one of Manila's sixth districts.

3,151 trees

MAKATI Mayor Elenita S. Binay yesterday said the city government, through its Department of Environmental Services (DES), has planted 3,151 different kinds of trees in the city since last year.

Binay said the tree planting is part of the city's greening program along Makati's major thoroughfares.

Engineer Ramon Ignacio, chief of the DES, said that among the trees planted were mahogany, indian tree and ficus (*balete*).

Makati has won the Gawad Pangulo Para sa Kapaligiran Awards three times, in 1995, 1996 and 2000.

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PHILAM X TEAM

Hail the Winning Heroes!!!

Discipline. Skills. Determination. These are the exceptional qualities that set the Philam Plans X-Team apart! Kaya kami ang may tunay na tatak ng bida!

2000 Top Awardees of Philam Plans

They are the Philam Plans X-Team elite! Undaunted by challenges. Victorious in the face of challenges. Heroes who turned adversities into opportunities to provide superior service to the Filipino family.

Congratulations
for making our Philam Plans X-Team proud!

Gloria G. Tuazon
Tuazon & Associates
District Manager Top Awards
Chairman's Council

Marcelino Luisito F. Ocampo
Maligaya Agency
First Place
Unit Manager Top Awards
President's Honor Club

Socorro D. Sarmiento
Tolentino & Associates
Sales Counselor Top Awards
Salary Allotment & Group
Business Special Awards

Ernesto R. Mayo
Maligaya Agency
First Place
Top Sales Counselor
Cross-Sell Awards

Francisco B. Bautista
Maligaya Agency
First Place
Agency Manager Top Awards
Top Agency Manager Cross-Sell Awards
Chairman's Council
President's Honor Club

Allan G. Tuazon
Tuazon & Associates
Agency Manager Top Awards
Chairman's Council
President's Honor Club

Violeta M. Ocampo
Maligaya Agency
First Place
District Manager Top Awards
President's Honor Club

Arlene C. Racelis
Maligaya Agency
First Place
Sales Counselor Top Awards
President's Honor Club

2000 TOP AWARDEES OF PHILAM PLANS

TOP 10 AGENCY MANAGERS

1st Place
Francisco B. Bautista
Maligaya Agency
(w/ wife Julieta Bautista)

2nd Place
Carolina B. Bautista
Bautista & Associates
(w/ husband Alejandro Bautista, Jr.)

3rd Place
Estela C. Hilario
Hilario & Associates
(w/ husband Ferdinand Hilario)

4th Place
Allan G. Tuazon
Tuazon & Associates
(w/ wife Rizalina Tuazon)

5th Place
Corazon M. Palma
Palma and Associates
(w/ son Hans Palma)

6th Place
Aurelio M. Clariño
Clariño & Associates
(w/ wife Alma Clariño)

7th Place
Victoria M. Crizaldo
Crizaldo & Associates
(w/ husband Natalio Crizaldo, Jr.)

8th Place
Remando C. Arcibal
Arcibal & Associates
(w/ wife Evelyn Arcibal)

9th Place
Resureccion G. Dela Cruz
Guadiz-Dela Cruz and Associates
(w/ husband Jesus Junilson Dela Cruz)

10th Place
Amelia S. Yap
Nickel Agency
(w/ husband Sydney Thaddeus Yap)

TOP 6 DISTRICT MANAGERS

1st Place
Violeta M. Ocampo
Maligaya Agency
(w/ husband Marcelino Luisito Ocampo)

2nd Place
Alma C. Clariño
Clariño & Associates
(w/ husband Aurelio Clariño)

3rd Place
Melania L. Tizon
Maligaya Agency
(w/ son RJ Tizon)

4th Place
Gloria G. Tuazon
Tuazon & Associates
(w/ husband Iluminado Tuazon)

5th Place
Jannet E. Dulay
Dulay & Associates
(w/ husband Romerico Dulay)

6th Place
Rosario P. Andrada
Benetua & Associates
(w/ son Ernesto Andrada, Jr)

TOP 10 UNIT MANAGERS

1st Place
Marcelino Luisito F. Ocampo
Maligaya Agency
(w/ wife Violeta Ocampo)

2nd Place
Danilo M. Mercado
Mercado Associates
(w/ wife Elizabeth Mercado)

3rd Place
Eric T. Bautista
Maligaya Agency
(w/ wife Maria Velbeth Bautista)

4th Place
Norma D. Ampon
Bautista & Associates
(w/ husband Alfredo Ampon)

5th Place
Filipina A. Speleski
Umali & Associates
(w/ Agency Manager Monette Umali)

6th Place
Gloria S. Lamug
Crizaldo & Associates
(w/ husband Michael Lamug, Sr.)

7th Place
Ma. Rowena G. Ragudo
Tolentino & Associates
(w/ husband Reynaldo Ragudo)

8th Place
Macario C. Garcia
Maligaya Agency
(w/ son Mark Andrew Garcia)

9th Place
Rizalina T. Tuazon
Tuazon & Associates
(w/ husband Allan Tuazon)

10th Place
Wilfredo P. Miranda
Palma & Associates
(w/ Agency Manager Cora Palma)

TOP 20 SALES COUNSELORS

1st Place
Arlene C. Racelis
Maligaya Agency
(w/ mother Leonora Racelis)

2nd Place
Aurora Virginia M. Almonte
Lasala & Associates
(w/ husband Jorge Almonte)

3rd Place
Julita P. Borja
Bautista & Associates
(w/ husband Alfonso Borja)

4th Place
Mercedes C. Garcia
Maligaya Agency
(w/ husband Fernando Garcia)

5th Place
Socorro D. Sarmiento
Tolentino & Associates
(w/ son Leonard JC Sarmiento)

6th Place
Melisa M. De Leon
Maguets & Associates
(w/ husband Armando De Leon)

7th Place
Mary Jane L. Maulion
Tolentino & Associates
(w/ mother Juanita Maulion)

8th Place
Lourdes V. Robles
De Guzman & Associates
(w/ husband Danilo Robles)

9th Place
Victoria T. Lopez
Clariño & Associates
(w/ sister Carmencita Petaño)

10th Place
Evangeline A. Villamil
Servito & Associates
(w/ husband Ernesto Villamil)

11th Place
Alvin B. Ybuan
Benetua & Associates
(w/ wife Penny Ybuan)

12th Place
Carissa M. Palma
Palma & Associates
(w/ mother Corazon Palma)

13th Place
Iluminado D. Tuazon
Tuazon & Associates
(w/ wife Gloria Tuazon)

14th Place
Valentino L. Cabello
Maligaya Agency
(w/ District Manager Melania Tizon)

15th Place
Genoveva B. Dela Paz
Hilario & Associates
(w/ Unit Manager Evelyn Edralin)

16th Place
Marcelino F. Gutierrez
Santos & Associates
(w/ wife Medelyn Gutierrez)

17th Place
Michael F. Lamug, Sr.
Crizaldo & Associates
(w/ wife Gloria Lamug)

18th Place
Efren S. Delos Reyes
Crizaldo & Associates
(w/ wife Pauline Delos Reyes)

19th Place
Rolando F. Ramos
Tuazon & Associates
(w/ wife Nelia Ramos)

20th Place
Imelda C. Ces
Godoy & Associates
(w/ sister Linda Ces)

CROSS-SELL AWARDS

AGENCY MANAGER CATEGORY

1st Place
Francisco B. Bautista
Maligaya Agency
(w/ wife Julieta Bautista)

2nd Place
Marginlina B. Bello
Bello & Associates
(w/ son Marq Wilson Bello)

SALES COUNSELOR CATEGORY

1st Place
Ernesto R. Mayo
Maligaya Agency
(w/ wife Lorna Mayo)

2nd Place
Gliceria P. Magno
Hilario & Associates
(w/ husband Carlos Magno)

SA/GB SPECIAL AWARD

Socorro D. Sarmiento
Tolentino & Associates
Sales Counselor Category
(w/ son Leonardo JC Sarmiento)

2000 PRESIDENT'S HONOR CLUB MEMBERS

Every year Philam Plans awards President's Honor Club membership to exceptional men and women who are able to live up to high standards of excellence in the field of sales. This year, membership is limited to the individuals who live up to their vocation of providing security and comfort to the Filipinos. These are the people who have rightfully earned their seat next to the President. These are the people who will take Philam Plans to even greater heights this 2001.

1. Francisco B. Bautista
2. Carolina B. Bautista
3. Estela C. Hilario
4. Allan G. Tuazon
5. Violeta M. Ocampo
6. Melania L. Tizon
7. Marcelino Luisito F. Ocampo
8. Danilo L. Mercado
9. Filipina A. Speleski
10. Arlene C. Racelis
11. Aurora Virginia M. Almonte
12. Julita P. Borja
13. Mary Jane L. Maulion
14. Lourdes V. Robles
15. Victoria T. Lopez
16. Alvin B. Ybuan
17. Iluminado D. Tuazon
18. Valentino L. Cabello
19. Genoveva B. Dela Paz
20. Marcelino F. Gutierrez

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PHILAMPLANS

Lakbayan 2001

PRESIDENT'S HONOR CLUB

The elite. The cream of the crop. The select few deserving membership to a prestigious group of distinct sales associates. These are the men and women who comprise the President's Honor Club.

With the steep qualifications to this club, membership is limited only to outstanding individuals who dare to soar and leave the pack behind. These are the people who face challenges with the courage and conviction not only to succeed but to excel. These are the people who will inevitably take Philam Plans to a brighter horizon this 2001.

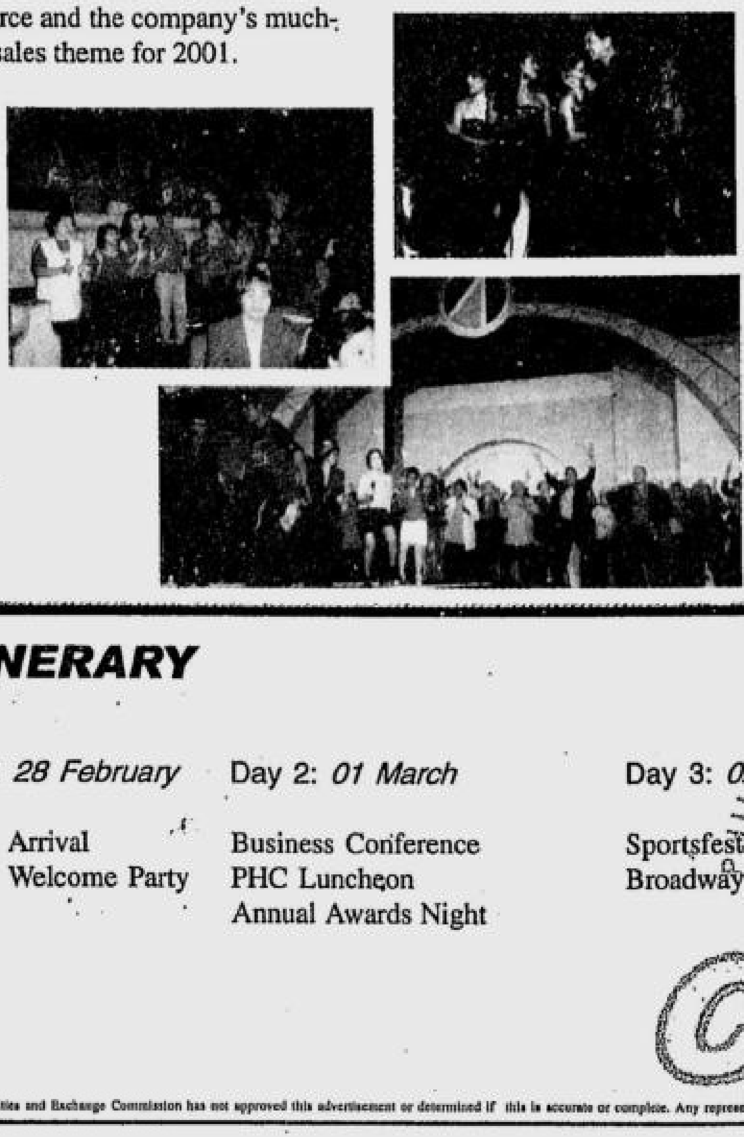
Chairman's Council

Last year, we inducted our very first member to the prestigious Chairman's Council, Allan Tuazon. This year, we welcome two more members to this select group of individuals, recognizing their unwavering commitment, dedication, perseverance and undying loyalty.

It is with great pride and honor that we welcome Senior Agency Manager Francisco Bautista and District Manager Gloria Tuazon to the illustrious Chairman's Council for 2001.

PHILAM X TEAM

At the start of the year, Philam Plans Metro Manila and Luzon-based sales associates trooped to the PICC Plenary Hall for the annual Kick-off Sales Rally. Highlight of the activity was the launching of X-Team, a core group of Philam Plans sales force and the company's much-touted sales theme for 2001.



PHILAM PLANS
GLOBETROTTERS
2002

Philam Plans treats its top producers to a vacation in a foreign country every year. They have been to Hong Kong, Australia, Singapore and Las Vegas. This year, Philam Plans' privileged jetsetters are flying off to two exciting foreign destinations–they can opt to go on a dream tour to USA Disneyland or embark on a trip to China and Hong Kong!

ITINERARY

Day 1: *28 February*	Day 2: *01 March*	Day 3: *02 March*	Day 4: *03 March*
Arrival Welcome Party	Business Conference PHC Luncheon Annual Awards Night	Sportsfest Broadway Night	Thanksgiving Mass Departure

PHILAM PLANS LAKBAYAN 2001

CEBU

Messages

Greetings to all delegates of Lakbayan 2001!

In behalf of the Board of Directors, I send my warmest congratulations to the awardees and qualifiers of Lakbayan 2001. The past year was truly a trying period for the country. The political crisis we underwent affected the stability of our economy. The peso-dollar exchange rate exhibited tremendous volatility. Consequently, many of our countrymen and foreign investors as well shied away from making investments in our country.

Because of the economic downturn, many businesses closed shop. However, for us at Philam Plans, it was business as usual. For this remarkable achievement under trying times, we can only thank you, our prized sales associates. You were the ones who brought us this triumph. You were the ones who made this happen.

With your hard work and dedication, I am looking forward to a great year this 2001. I am confident that the company is in good hands with you in our team.

Congratulations and more power!

Jose L. Cuisia, Jr.
Chairman of the Board
Philam Plans, Inc.

Welcome to Lakbayan 2001, our much-awaited Annual Awards celebration.

Once again, I am given an opportunity to meet the company's top awardees through this momentous event. I look forward to this special occasion because being in your company gives me the confidence that surely, the organization can only look forward to a brighter future with you aboard.

As I laud all your hardwork in the year just passed, I challenge you to aim for higher goals this 2001. There should be no obstacles too high and challenges too great to deter you from your goals. Set no limits to what you can achieve and strive hard to get to the top. With your patience, commitment and hard work, no doubt you will once again score endless triumphs this 2001.

Good luck in your journey and congratulations!

Eliseo P. Dizon, Jr.
President and CEO

As we gather together for this year's annual awards, I look forward with excitement to be in the company of such high performing sales executives. To be with all of you is truly an honor.

You are the people who braved the hardships and trials in the year just passed...a time, I should note, fraught with great difficulties and challenges. I welcome the fact that such hardships failed to cripple you in your efforts to bring future security and comfort to our fellow Filipinos. I praise the fact that you patiently carried out your mission with such diligence and dedication.

This year, let us go even further in preaching the good news of our products and services to our countrymen. Let us make it our goal to reach as many Filipinos as we can so many can enjoy the good life we offer. Let us aim high to reach the top and claim membership to the elite X-Team.

Good luck in this our noble undertaking.

Luie C. Dy Buncio
SVP-Marketing

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SM CINEMA GUIDE

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NOW SHOWING

SM CITY BACOOR 4173848

1	DOLBY SURROUND	TUHOG
2	DOLBY SURROUND	DEMON GATE
3	DOLBY DIGITAL	HANNIBAL
4	DOLBY SURROUND	TUSONG TWOSOME
5	DOLBY DIGITAL EX	CAST AWAY
6	DOLBY SURROUND	HOSTAGE
7	DOLBY SURROUND	OBJECT OF OBSESSION
8	DOLBY SURROUND	BLONDIE

SM CENTERPOINT 7149822 • 7161416

1	DOLBY SURROUND	HOSTAGE
2	DOLBY SURROUND	OBJECT OF OBSESSION
3	DTS	HANNIBAL
4	DOLBY SURROUND	DEMON GATE
5	DOLBY DIGITAL	CAST AWAY
6	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	BLONDIE
7	DOLBY SURROUND	TUSONG TWOSOME
8	DOLBY SURROUND	WOMEN ON TOP
9	DOLBY SURROUND	TUHOG
10	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	FAMILY MAN

SM CITY FAIRVIEW 9350749

1	DOLBY SURROUND	DEMON GATE
2	DOLBY SURROUND	102 DALMATIANS
3	DOLBY SURROUND	BLONDIE
4	DOLBY DIGITAL	HANNIBAL
5	DOLBY SURROUND	HOSTAGE
6	DOLBY SURROUND	TUSONG TWOSOME
7	DOLBY DIGITAL	HANNIBAL
8	DOLBY SURROUND	WOMAN ON TOP
9	DOLBY SURROUND	HOSTAGE
10	DOLBY SURROUND	CAST AWAY
11	DOLBY SURROUND	OBJECT OF OBSESSION
12	DOLBY SURROUND	TUHOG

SM CITY MANILA 5239240

1	DOLBY DIGITAL	WOMAN ON TOP
2	DOLBY DIGITAL	CAST AWAY
3	DOLBY SURROUND	FAMILY MAN
4	DOLBY SURROUND	HANNIBAL
5	DOLBY DIGITAL	PAY IT FORWARD
6	DOLBY DIGITAL EX	HANNIBAL
7	DOLBY SURROUND	DEMON GATE
8	DOLBY SURROUND	TUHOG
9	DOLBY SURROUND	HOSTAGE
10	DOLBY SURROUND	BLONDIE
11	DOLBY SURROUND	OBJECT OF OBSESSION
12	DOLBY SURROUND	TUSONG TWOSOME

GUADALUPE COMM'L CTR 8820950

1	ULTRA SURROUND	BLONDIE
2	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	HANNIBAL
3	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	HOSTAGE

SM MEGAMALL 6331901 • 6329401

1	DOLBY DIGITAL	CAST AWAY
2	DOLBY SURROUND	FAMILY MAN
3	DOLBY DIGITAL	HOSTAGE
4	DTS	HANNIBAL
5	DOLBY SURROUND	WOMAN ON TOP
6	DOLBY SURROUND	TUSONG TWOSOME
7	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
8	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
9	DOLBY SURROUND	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
10	DOLBY SURROUND	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
11	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
12	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION

SM CITY NORTH EDSA 9295452

1	DOLBY SURROUND	BLONDIE
2	DOLBY SURROUND	TUHOG
3	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	TUSONG TWOSOME
4	DOLBY SURROUND	HOSTAGE
5	DOLBY SURROUND	CAST AWAY
6	DOLBY SURROUND	OBJECT OF OBSESSION
7	DTS	HANNIBAL
8	DOLBY DIGITAL	HANNIBAL
9	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	WOMAN ON TOP
10	DOLBY SURROUND	FAMILY MAN
11	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	PAY IT FORWARD
12	DOLBY SURROUND	DEMON GATE

SM SOUTHMALL 8094888 • 8068782

1	ULTRA SURROUND	CAST AWAY
2	ULTRA SURROUND	TUSONG TWOSOME
3	DOLBY DIGITAL EX	HANNIBAL
4	ULTRA SURROUND	HOSTAGE
5	ULTRA SURROUND	BLONDIE
6	ULTRA SURROUND	DEMON GATE
7	ULTRA SURROUND	HOSTAGE
8	DOLBY DIGITAL EX	HANNIBAL
9	ULTRA SURROUND	TUHOG
10	ULTRA SURROUND	OBJECT OF OBSESSION

TUTUBAN CENTER 2514302

1	ULTRA SURROUND	HANNIBAL
2	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	TUSONG TWOSOME
3	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	HOSTAGE
4	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	BLONDIE

SM CEBU 2313876

1	DOLBY SURROUND	102 DALMATIANS
2	ULTRA SURROUND	HANNIBAL
3	ULTRA SURROUND	WOMAN ON TOP
4	ULTRA SURROUND	TUHOG
5	ULTRA SURROUND	HOSTAGE
6	ULTRA SURROUND	CAST AWAY
7	DOLBY SURROUND	VERTICAL LIMIT

SM ILOILO 3209422

1	ULTRA SURROUND	102 DALMATIANS
2	ULTRA SURROUND	PROOF OF LIFE
3	ULTRA SURROUND	VITAL PARTS
4	ULTRA SURROUND	VIRGIN WIFE
5	ULTRA SURROUND	HOSTAGE
6	ULTRA SURROUND	PHANTOM OF THE OPERA
7	ULTRA SURROUND	CAST AWAY
8	ULTRA SURROUND	VERTICAL LIMIT

SM PAMPANGA 7120015

1	DOLBY DIGITAL EX	HANNIBAL
2	DOLBY DIGITAL EX	CAST AWAY
3	DOLBY SURROUND	DEMON GATE
4	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	TUHOG
5	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	TUSONG TWOSOME
6	DOLBY SURROUND	HOSTAGE

Movies are subject to change without prior notice.

AYALA CINEMAS

NOW SHOWING

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reserve seats through www.sureseats.com

GLORIETTA 1 (formerly QUAD)

1	HOSTAGE	
2	HANNIBAL	
3	TUHOG	
4	OBJECT OF OBSESSION	

GLORIETTA 4 (All Digital Sound)

1	CAST AWAY	In DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
2	WOMAN ON TOP	In DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
3	HANNIBAL THX	In DSD/SDDS/DTS DIGITAL SOUND
4	TIGERLAND (Phil. Premiere) Art Film	In DTS DIGITAL SOUND
5	PAY IT FORWARD	In DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
6	HANNIBAL	In DTS/SDDS DIGITAL SOUND
7	FAMILY MAN	In DTS DIGITAL SOUND

GREENBELT

1	CAST AWAY	In DOLBY STEREO DIGITAL SOUND
2	HANNIBAL	In SONY DYNAMIC DIGITAL SOUND
3	PAY IT FORWARD	In DOLBY STEREO DIGITAL SOUND
4	SOON TO OPEN Onstage	

ALABANG TOWN CENTER

1	HANNIBAL THX	In DTS/SDDS DIGITAL SOUND
2	PAY IT FORWARD	In DSD DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
3	CAST AWAY	In DTS DIGITAL SOUND
4	WOMAN ON TOP	In DTS DIGITAL SOUND
5	HOSTAGE	In DTS DIGITAL SOUND

MMTA

METRO MANILA THEATERS ASSOCIATION

MOVIE GUIDE

NOW SHOWING

Filinvest FESTIVAL CINEMA
(Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72

1 (SDDS)	WOMAN ON TOP
2 (SDDS)	HANNIBAL
3 (DTS)	CAST AWAY
4 SALA (DTS)	HANNIBAL
5 SALA (DOLBY)	SPLENDOR
6 SALA (SDDS)	FAMILY MAN
7 SALA (DOLBY)	VERTICAL LIMIT
8 [illegible]	102 DALMATIANS
9 [illegible]	HOSTAGE
10 [illegible]	TUSONG TWOSOME

Pearl Plaza Cinemas
(Parañaque) tel. 853.4486

1	WAY OF THE GUN
2	
3 (DTS)	HOSTAGE
4	
5	
6 (DTS)	PAY IT FORWARD

Golden Pearl THX

Masagana CINEMAX 1-2 & 3
(Kalaw) tel 536.4315

1 (DOLBY)	HANNIBAL
2 (DTS)	RESERVE
3	HOSTAGE

Masagana CINEMA
(Pasay) tel 831.6603

1	HOSTAGE
2	HANNIBAL
3	BLONDIE

starmall Movies
(Shaw Blvd.) tel 724.4986

1	HOSTAGE
2	TUSONG TWOSOME
3	TUHOG
4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	HANNIBAL
5	BLONDIE

Metropolis
(Alabang) tel 543.4001

1	OBJECT OF OBSESSION
2	TUHOG
3	HOSTAGE
4	TUSONG TWOSOME
5	RESERVE
6	HANNIBAL
7	BLONDIE
8	

Uniwide Metromall
(Las Piñas) tel. 873.5606 loc. 1074
WATCH 3 MOVIE FOR ONLY P30.00

1	KANGKONG
2	READY TO RUMBLE
3	GOSSIP
4	–
5	
6	

Uniwide Coastal Mall
(Parañaque) tel 879.0001 loc. 2152
WATCH 3 MOVIE FOR ONLY P30.00

1	NAKED LIES
2	ARAYY
3	RD PLANET
4	

Center Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007

1	TABI TABI PO
2	PROOF OF LIFE

FCM FAIRVIEW CENTER MALL, INC.
tel 930.9515

1	RESERVE
2	BLONDIE
3	HOSTAGE

Spring
(Libertad, Pasay City) tel 831.7864

1	HOSTAGE
A	TURN ON

JC Cinema
(Parañaque) tel 825.8626

1	HOSTAGE
3	

GOTESCO CINEMA

City
(Manila) tel 734.8588

1 (DOLBY)	HOSTAGE
2	TUHOG
3	DEMON GATE
4	OBJECT OF OBSESSION
5	TUSONG TWOSOME
6	BLONDIE
7 (DTS)	HANNIBAL
8 (SDDS)	CAST AWAY
9 (DOLBY)	WOMAN ON TOP

Caloocan
tel 362.3508

2	BLONDIE
3	HANNIBAL
4	HOSTAGE
5	
6	

Grand Central
(Caloocan) tel 364.3781

1	HOSTAGE
2	TUSONG TWOSOME
3	HOSTAGE
4 (SDDS)	TUHOG
5	OBJECT OF OBSESSION
6 (DOLBY)	BLONDIE
7 (DTS)	HANNIBAL
8	ALWAYS A COP
9	THE SADE

Commonwealth
tel 951.0083

1 (DTS)	HANNIBAL
2	TUSONG TWOSOME
3	HOSTAGE
4	BLONDIE
5 (SDDS)	HOSTAGE
6	TUHOG
7 (DOLBY)	CAST AWAY
8	OBJECT OF OBSESSION

Ortigas
tel 656.6795

1	OBJECT OF OBSESSION
2	BLONDIE
3 (DTS)	HOSTAGE
4	TUHOG
5 (SDDS)	HANNIBAL
6 (DOLBY)	HOSTAGE
7 (DOLBY)	TUSONG TWOSOME

Universal
(Manila) tel 733.2470

1	HOSTAGE

Sampaguita
(Cubao) tel 911.7888

1	HOSTAGE

Dilson
(Manila) tel 734.7724

Dilson	TUHOG
Lords	BLONDIE
Jennet	HOSTAGE

MARKETPLACE Mandaluyong
tel 533.3851 / 533.3856

1	HANNIBAL
2	HOSTAGE
3	TUSONG TWOSOME
4	TUHOG

Prima
(Pasig) tel 641.1215

1	
3	HOSTAGE

Super Cinerama
(Manila) tel 733.4226 or 733.4238

1	HOSTAGE
2	TUHOG
3	BLONDIE
4	HANNIBAL
5	TUSONG TWOSOME

Divisoria Mall
(Manila) tel 244.4560 or 244.4619

1	HOSTAGE
2	BLONDIE
3	TUHOG
4	TUSONG TWOSOME
5	OBJECT OF OBSESSION
6	FAMILY MAN

Baclaran LRT Cinema
tel 512.0115 or 512.0116

1	HOSTAGE
2	HANNIBAL
3	BLONDIE

CINEMA 2000

Cinema 2000 Target Mall
(Sta. Rosa Laguna)
tel (049) 534.2185 / 534.2198

1	TUSONG TWOSOME
2	HOSTAGE
3 (DTS)	HANNIBAL

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383

1	HOSTAGE
2 (DTS)	PAY IT FORWARD
3 (DOLBY)	HANNIBAL
4	DEMON GATE

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276

1 (SDDS)	HANNIBAL
2	BLONDIE
3	TUHOG
4 (DTS)	HOSTAGE

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202

1 (DOLBY)	HANNIBAL
2	HOSTAGE
3 (DTS)	PAY IT FORWARD
4	TUSONG TWOSOME
5	DEMON GATE

Olivarez Tri-Cinema
(Biñan) tel (049) 511.8883

1	HANNIBAL
2	HOSTAGE
3	PAY IT FORWARD

Olivarez Los Baños
tel (049) 536.5101

1	HANNIBAL
2	HOSTAGE
3	[illegible]TCH

Olivarez Tagaytay
tel (046) 413.0311

1	TUSONG TWOSOME
2	HOSTAGE
3	TUHOG

Morales Cinema
(Biñan) tel (049) 511.9736

1	HANNIBAL
2	HOSTAGE
3	FAMILY MAN

Sunshine
(FTI, Taguig) tel 838.4301 loc. 3376

1	HOSTAGE
2	TUHOG
3	BLONDIE
4	TUSONG TWOSOME

Cabuyao
(Laguna City) tel (049) 243.2783

1 (DTS)	HOSTAGE
2 (DTS)	TUSONG TWOSOME

Fourstep
(Cavite) tel (046) 416.2385

1	HOSTAGE

Emperor
(Rosario Cavite) tel (046) 438.1657

1	TUSONG TWOSOME
2	HOSTAGE
3	TUHOG

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790

1	CAST AWAY
2	TUSONG TWOSOME
3	TUHOG
4	HOSTAGE

Berma
tel 879.2168

1	
2	

CitiMall
(Parañaque) tel 820.7269

1	TUSONG TWOSOME
2	BLONDIE
3	HOSTAGE
4	HANNIBAL

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03

1 (DOLBY EX)	HANNIBAL
2	TUSONG TWOSOME
3	HOSTAGE
4 (DTS EX)	PAY IT FORWARD

*Movie[illegible]ct to change without [illegible] notice

THX DOLBY dts SDDS

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a special presentation

'Miss Saigon' special airs tonight on RPN 9

SAIGON Company Philippines, with Ang Bayang Makulay Foundation, will present a glimpse into the behind-the-scene happenings of "Miss Saigon" in a TV special, to be aired 10:30 tonight on RPN 9.

Meet the people behind the mounting of this world-class musical production. Also get up-close and personal with the performers and their experiences on being part of the Philippine production of "Miss Saigon."

Find out details you never knew before by watching what happens behind closed doors—auditions, setup, wardrobe, wigs, props and technical requirements.

Meet the originators and join cohosts Raul Montesa, Ariel Reonal, Jun Ofrasio, Miriam Valmores, Charmaine Tulali, Analin Bantug and Russell Walker, as they bring viewers through the world of "Miss Saigon.".

Auditions for male solo pop singer

SENSING a void in the current Filipino pop music landscape, a new group of musically inclined individuals is seriously looking to build and manage the next male solo pop star.

The prospective talent must be between 18-24 years old, good looking, and a fantastic singer with a wide voice range.

Auditions will be held March 3, Saturday, 1-6 p.m. at Quattro Bar and Grill on 96 Timog Avenue, Quezon City (before the Timog Rotunda if coming from Edsa).

Interested individuals must bring a recent colored photo and their own minus-one (audio-cassette or VCD karaoke format).

For more information and details, call or text Louie Aguinaldo at (0917) 529-5706.

'Pokemon' now on 2nd season

GMA-7 brings back the lovable Pikachu in the phenomenal TV hit series, "Pokemon," now on its second season.

When Pikachu made his farewell bow in October, GMA was deluged with countless e-mail and phone calls from viewers pleading for the return of the beloved cartoon.

Brace yourselves for non-stop action as Ash, Misty, Brock and Pikachu take you on an exciting adventure every week in must-see new episodes of "Pokemon," which airs every Friday, 7:30 to 8 p.m. on GMA.

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NOW SHOWING

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1. HANNIBAL
2. CAST AWAY
3. BLONDIE / TUSONG TWOSOME
4. WOMAN ON TOP
5. HOSTAGE
6. OBJECT OF OBSESSION
7. HANNIBAL

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2. TUHOG
3. TUSONG TWOSOME
4. CAST AWAY
5. BLONDIE
6. HOSTAGE

BACOLOD
(034)441-0453

1. 102 DALMATIANS
2. PROOF OF LIFE
3. VITAL PARTS
4. BOUNCE
5. CAST AWAY
6. IKA - 7 GLORYA

DOLBY dts SDDS

THEATER MOVIE GUIDE

ARANETA CENTER THEATERS 911-3101

ALI MALL CINEPLEX-1	TUHOG
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-2	TUSONG 2 SOME
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-3 (DDS)	CAST AWAY
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-4 (SDDS)	SNATCH
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-5 (DTS)	PAY IT FORWARD
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-6 (DOLBY)	102 DALMATIANS
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-7 (DOLBY)	WAY OF THE GUN
FARMERS PLAZA-1 (DOLBY)	PAY IT FORWARD
FARMERS PLAZA-2 (DOLBY)	TUHOG
FIESTA CARNIVAL	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
NEW FRONTIER	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
MANILA	
EASTERN	
MAXIM	OBJECT OF OBSESSION
MIRAMAR	GATAS / MY PRIVATE TEACHER
ODEON	HANNIBAL
ODEON-2	OBJECT OF OBSESSION
ROBEN	HOSTAGE
TANDEM-1	SA IYONG MGA HAPLOS
TANDEM-2	IKA - 7 GLORYA
TIMES	BLAIRWITCH 2 / GOSSIP
QUEZON CITY	
ACT-1	ANAK NG YAKUSA
ACT-2	ANAK NG KANO
ACT-3	ALIPIN NG TUKSO
ACT-4	TURN ON
CORONET-2	BLONDIE
QUEZON-1	HANIBAL
REMAR	HOSTAGE
REMAR-2	OBJECT OF OBSESSION
CUBAO	
OCEAN SUPERAMA	TUHOG
OCEAN CINEMA-A	BOYFRIEND KONG PARI
OCEAN CINEMA-B	KATAYAN
MANDALUYONG CITY	
SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA-1	HANNIBAL
CINEMA-2	THE CASTLE OF SAND
CAINTA RIZAL	
STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-54091 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	HOSTAGE
CINEMA-2	DEMON GATE
CINEMA-3	BLONDIE
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	102 DALMATIANS
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	VERTICAL LIMIT
CINEMA-6	HOSTAGE
CINEMA-7	VIRGIN WIFE
CINEMA-8	TUHOG
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	HANNIBAL
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	HANNIBAL
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	CAST AWAY
CINEMA-12	OBJECT OF OBSESSION
CINEMA-14	HOSTAGE
CINEMA-15	TUSONG TWOSOME
LORES	
CINEMA-2	HOSTAGE
CINEMA-3	TUHOG
POWER PLANT CINEMA	
CINEMA-1	HIGH FIDELITY
CINEMA-2	HANNIBAL
CINEMA-3	PAY IT FORWARD
CINEMA-4	FAMILY MAN
CINEMA-5	CAST AWAY
CINEMA-6	HANNIBAL

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NOW SHOWING

HANNIBAL

(R-18 / RT 2:05)
Suspense / Thriller
Anthony Hopkins
Julianne Moore

March 1 - Thursday
5:10 PM - Hannibal
7:55 PM - Hannibal
10:40 PM - Hannibal

March 2 - Friday
4:40 PM - Hannibal
7:25 PM - Hannibal
10:10 PM - Hannibal

Sandra Bullock is MS. CONGENIALITY opens March 7 Wednesday

Watch out for our 4th issue WOMEN IN CINEMA coming out in March!

Pelikula is one of the beneficiary projects of the LRP Foundation, published jointly with the U-P College of Mass Communication.

Hear the Difference. Feel the Excitement

ENTERTAINMENT

LOUIE C. CAMINO, Editor

Star turns

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

KEANU Reeves' film career has perked up after "The Matrix" made him a bankable mainstream star, swiftling canceling out the flops he racked up before that.

Not only is he doing two "Matrix" sequels in a row, but he's also topbilling movies like "The Watcher" and "Sweet November." The second film, a remake of a 1968 movie starring **Sandy Dennis** and **Anthony Newly,** casts **Charlize Theron** as a woman who changes boyfriends every month. Reeves portrays her November beau who refuses to be just one in a series of her romantic flavors of the month!

For his part, **Brendan Fraser** costars with **Bridget Fonda** in "Monkeybone." He plays a cartoonist who is hit on the head and finds himself in a fantasy world ruled by the monkey character he's been drawing for years.

As for **Sylvester Stallone**, his gone filmless for quite a while but snaps back into action in "Driven," a film directed by **Renny Harlin**, who megged "Cliffhanger," one of Stallone's biggest hits. How's that for box-office insurance?

In addition, Stallone is writing the film himself, just like he did with "Rocky," his first movie and a surprise blockbuster hit. He's hoping that lightning will strike twice!

This time around, the action star portrays a retired racing champion who is tapped to train a prodigiously gifted but cocky newcomer (**Kip Pardue**). Stallone promises a lot of action and heart in his latest bid to reclaim the screen glory he's lost.

Another action star on the comeback trail is **Steven Seagal**. His vehicle back to the bigtime (hope springs eternal!) is "Exit Wounds," described as yet another film about cops battling corruption within the force.

The project's plus point is not the fact that it costars **Tom Arnold,** but that its producer is **Joel Silver,** who produced the big hit, "The Matrix." Seagal and Arnold hope that Silver's Midas touch will rub off on them.

Finally, **Robert De Niro** stars with Edward Burns in "15 Minutes" No, it isn't Andy Warhol's film bio, but a creepy movie about two serial killers who record their crimes with their camcorder, hoping to sell the shocking footage to a tabloid TV show!

De Niro and Burns are cast as officers of the law who do everything they can to catch the elusive killers before they can add more grisly footage to their stomach-churning "reality TV" documentary.

De Niro, who has his pick of the best mature male roles in Hollywood filmdom, says he chose to do this movie over the dozens he's been offered because it exposes the fact that, these days even criminals become celebrities and get to enjoy their 15 minutes of fame.

What about the other way around? Portrait of **Andy Warhol** as played by **Robert Downey Jr.** or **Puffy Combs!**

TV treats

TONIGHT, 6:45 p.m. on Star Movies, **Andy Garcia** and **Meg Ryan** star in "When A Man Loves A Woman," (replays on March 2 at 3:30 p.m. and March 6 at 6:30 a.m.).

In the film, an alcoholic mother struggles through drug rehab, while her husband tries his best to support her, although he sometimes feels like giving up.

At 9 p.m., "Coming Home" topbills **Jon Voight** and Jane Fonda. The film which won the Oscar for best screenplay in 1978, is a powerful look at the effect of the Vietnam War on the people left at home.

Fonda falls in love with a paraplegic (Voight) while her husband (**Bruce Dern**) is overseas. The mature, gripping drama is marred only by occasional lapses into melodrama.

Academy Awards also went to Fonda and Voight. The movie's winning screenplay was written by **Waldo Salt, Robert C. Jones** and **Nancy Dowd**.

Friday, March 2 at 7:45 p.m. on Star Movies, "The Secret of N.I.M.H., 2," a cartoon fantasy about lovable, super-intelligent rodents in the new utopian society they have successfully created.

POWER PLANT
CINEMA
Rockwell Center, Makati City
Tel. No: [illegible]
DOLBY DIGITAL

1 HIGH FIDELITY - P 13 12:00, 2:25, 4:50, 7:15, 9:40	2 HANNIBAL - R 18 12:45, 3:30, 6:15, 9:00	3 PAY IT FORWARD - P 13 11:40, 2:15, 4:40, 7:15, 9:50
4 THE FAMILY MAN - P 13 11:40, 2:15, 4:50, 7:25, 10:00	5 CAST AWAY - P 13 1:30, 4:20, 7:10, 10:00	6 HANNIBAL - R 18 11:15, 2:00, 4:45, 7:30, 10:15

MATINEE P80.00 - FREE SEATING - SCREENINGS BEFORE 5 PM - MON TO FRI

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OPENS FEB. 28 (Wed.)
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TIGERLAND
THE BEST FILM OF THE YEAR
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A JOEL SCHUMACHER FILM
TIGERLAND
COLIN FARRELL
Tigerland marked director Joel Schumacher's welcomed return after the blockbusters like Batman & Robin, 8 mm, & Flawless. Tigerland also marked the deserving arrival of Irish actor Colin Farrell as Hollywood's hottest new discovery.
The film features a group of recruits that went through Advanced Infantry Training at Fort Polk, Louisiana's infamous Tigerland, the last stop before Vietnam for tens of thousands of young men in 1971.
WINNER
Colin Farrell - Best Actor @ 2000 Boston Society of Film Critics

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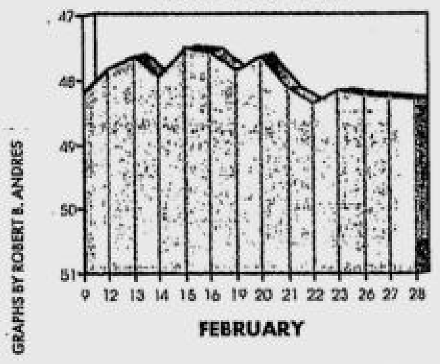
Romulo: Gov't to oust Danding from SMC

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES

PESO - DOLLAR



Peso-Dollar Rate

P 48.28 = $1
As of 5 p.m., Feb. 28, 2001

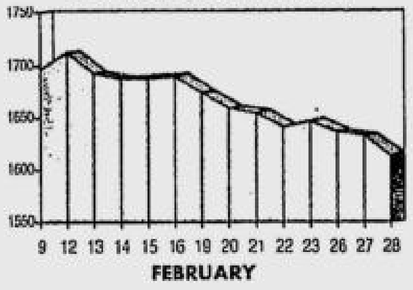
Y 116.44 = $1
The US dollar was trading at 116.44 as of 5 p.m., Feb. 28, 2001

GOLD:$266.00/266.50
per ounce Hong Kong, Feb. 28, 2001

STOCK MARKET

Shares end lower

PSE Composite Index



(See stock market report on Page B2)

SHARES finished lower yesterday, weakened by the sell-off in blue chip Philippine Long Distance Telephone on expectations the company will report disappointing 2000 earnings today, traders said.

The 30-company Philippine Stock Exchange Index ended down 18.81 points, or 1.2 percent, at 1613.49, after shedding 0.2 percent Tuesday. The index has lost 2 percent in three straight sessions.

Speculation that PLDT may have suffered as much as a 70-percent drop in 2000 net profit from the year-ago level of P2.8 billion triggered the sell-off that dragged down other shares, traders said. *AP*

By CLARISSA S. BATINO

FINANCE Secretary Alberto Romulo yesterday said the government would initiate two measures to ensure the ouster of Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco and his associates from San Miguel Corp. on or before the May 3 stockholders' meeting.

He said an executive order was being prepared by Malacañang while a legal battle would be mounted by the presidential legal staff to reclaim its rightful ownership over a 51-percent stake in the country's biggest food and beverage company.

The government reportedly missed out the Jan. 30 deadline for the submission of nominees to the San Miguel board. "But this is not a hard and fast rule. (Avelino) Cruz (the President's legal adviser) assured me this could be remedied in the SEC (Securities and Exchange Commission)," Romulo said.

The finance chief explained that President Macapagal's recent statements that the government did not have enough shares to elect a new chair was without prejudice to the actions Malacañang was planning to take soon to reverse the situation.

Romulo noted that a mere revocation of the two EOs signed by ousted President Estrada late last year that declared the coconut levy funds as private would allow the government to take back the voting rights on more than 51 percent of San Miguel.

The EO being prepared would declare the coconut levy funds used to buy San Miguel shares as public.

"Once these are declared public funds, we can appoint government nominees and elect not only a chair but also the vice chair and other officials," he said.

Romulo confirmed that former Social Security System president Renato Valencia was one of the names being considered to replace Cojuangco. If Valencia is appointed, the finance chief said he was confident that San Miguel would even be more profitable than it was now.

The finance chief explained that the government was not only running after the 27-percent stake the previous government wanted to sell but also the 20 percent the Estrada administration gave to Cojuangco plus a 4-percent loose stake that also belonged to government.

"If we don't have the numbers, we can't unseat Cojuangco. But we are already going to courts and an EO is being prepared. As far as I know, the President is supportive of these moves," Romulo said.

Cojuangco regained chairmanship of San Miguel a few days after ousted President Joseph Estrada came into power in July 1998. Cojuangco was one of the biggest campaign contributors to the presidential bid of Estrada.

The Presidential Commission on Good Government, created by former President Aquino to run after cronies of the late dictator Marcos, assigned the voting rights to Cojuangco.

The anti-graft court had sequestered during the time of former President Aquino about 47 percent of San Miguel on charges that these were ill-gotten and were bought using P9.6 billion in coconut levy funds collected by Marcos associate Cojuangco from coconut farmers.

PLDT purchase of GMA-7 needs Congress nod

By ANTHONY O. ALCANTARA

MEDIAQUEST Holdings Inc., a subsidiary of the beneficial trust fund of Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co., will have to seek congressional approval for its plan to acquire a majority stake in GMA Network Inc. before it could close the P8.5-billion deal.

GMA-7 president and chief executive officer Felipe Gozon said closing the deal could therefore take until late this year or early 2002.

"Congress will only convene this June so we cannot sign anything even if the PLDT group finishes its (confirmatory) due-diligence review (by April or May). It might take two to three or at most six months after acquiring the congressional approval," he said.

While there would be no new franchise for the new majority owner of GMA-7, the TV network's franchise requires the company to seek congressional approval for the transfer of majority or controlling ownership.

However, Gozon said he did not know of any reason why Congress would not approve the PLDT-GMA-7 deal.

On Feb. 7, Mediaquest signed a memorandum of understanding with GMA Network Inc. for the acquisition of a 66.67-percent majority stake in the TV firm.

The acquisition price will be based on an enterprise value of P14.59 billion for 100 percent of GMA-7 minus the company's debts or loans. Because the TV network had about P2 billion in net debt, Mediaquest would have to shell out approximately P8.5 billion for the 66.67-percent stake.

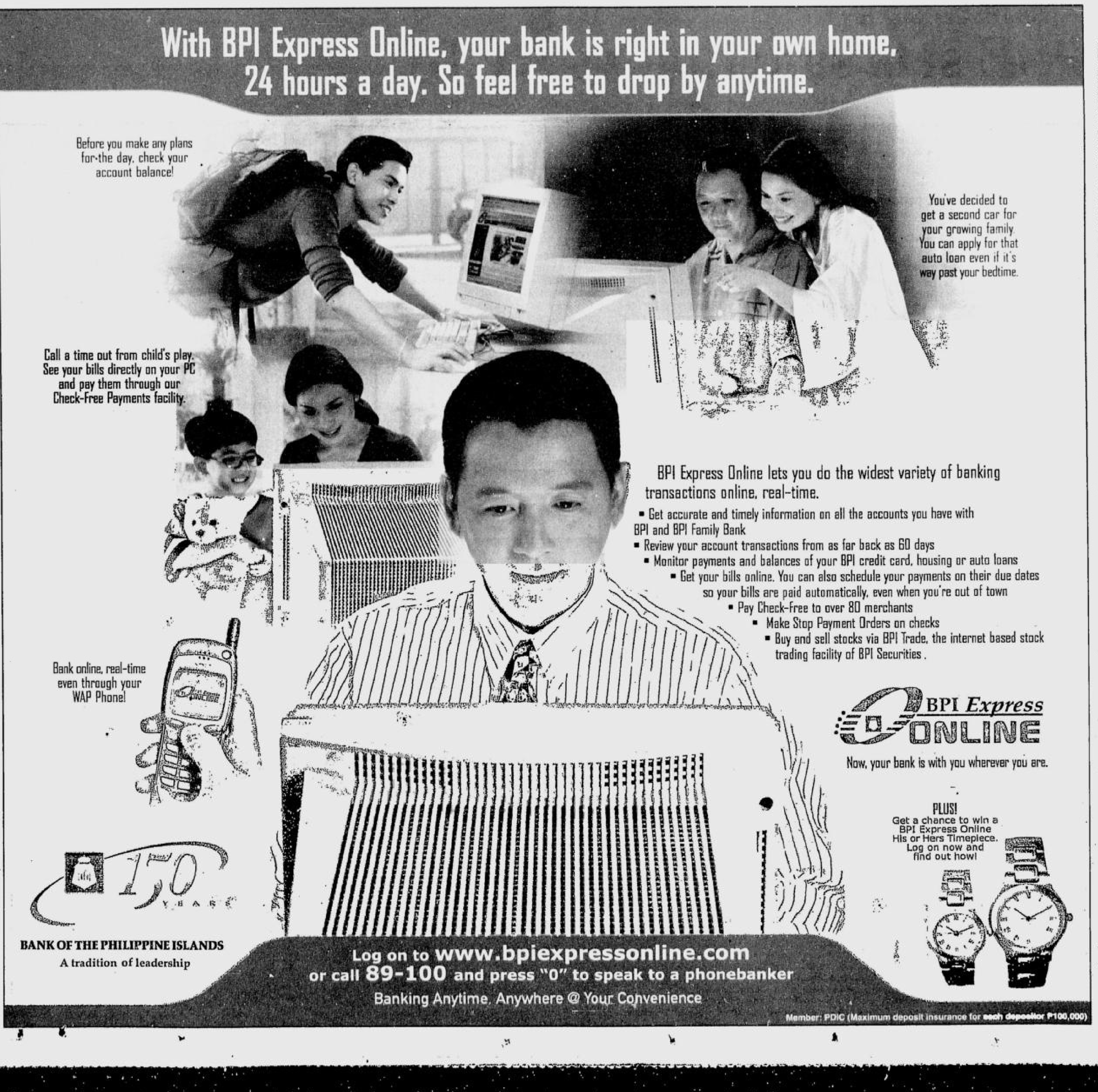
Gozon said GMA-7's book value was P3 per share. Based on an enterprise value of P14.59 billion, however, the TV network's value would be P8 to P9 per share, or a premium of about 300 percent.

Meanwhile, Mediaquest has started scouting for foreign financiers who could help the company fund its acquisition of GMA-7.

Mediaquest president Antonio R. Samson earlier said the company has shortlisted several foreign companies for funding at most half of the acquisition price.

He said these strategic investors, together with ePDLT, the principal corporate vehicle for PLDT's Internet, e-commerce and multimedia businesses, would maintain their economic interest in GMA-7 through the issuance of Philippine Depository Receipts (PDRs).

The acquisition would help the PLDT group provide the content for its convergence initiatives. Convergence refers to the eventual fusion of telecommunications, broadcast and Internet services through one medium or conduit.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BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal III

FOR more than a month now, the cute administration of Gloriaetta is trying to establish control. I think it's a swell idea. They're the same group, anyway, who assured everybody earlier that, if only they could take control, everything would be under control.

Today, their control still does not show in the stock market. It was down again yesterday. Unfortunately, stockbrokers and those "analysts" can now only look at this cute administration for the blame. It no longer has its favorite punching bag.

That was none other than the man named Band . . . Wrist Band. This was the same guy whom big business loved to blame for the market's sorry state. They said he already lost control. Apparently, all he could do for control involved some carnal muscles.

* * *

ANYWAY, if you are nosy like me, and so you ask around the stock market, you probably will also hear a lot about this word: UNCERTAINTY. No, it does not have anything to do with whether or not you score this weekend, you maniac!

"Uncertainty," at least as shown by soft prices of stocks the past several days, seems to be the "disorder" of the day. Technically speaking, this is the difficult question: "Helloooo!" In layman's term, it only means, "is anybody really in control?.

It is the same, if you believe the text messages, ahh, "multimillion" legal question before the Supreme Court. Can Wrist Band continue to pretend that he's still president on paper, even as Gloriaetta is actually still in the process of losing control? Hard to say!

In another front, the question of control is bothering the bejesus out of everybody in business. They include some local agents of foreign suppliers of helmets and rifles from Taiwan. By the way, it also frightens ordinary citizens.

More so because the question is running in the minds of several thousands of heavily armed men, who only undergo intensive training in various ways of killing human beings wholesale, otherwise known as the military!

If you believe soon-to-resign Housing Secretary Mike Defensor, control may also be an issue on how the Palace chooses people for juicy positions in the name of public service. Gone out of control, it seems, is this person going by the name of "civil society."

* * *

AS of the other night, Defensor was decided on resigning. He did not like what Mr. Civil Society did. Word is, for several days, he was hopping around the country with Gloriaetta. She never even hinted to him any new appointee in his area of responsibility.

That's housing, you moron, and not the weather report. It seems, anyway, the new housing czar just woke up one fine day and read in the papers that so-and-so and such-and-such were appointed to head important outfits in his area of . . . okay, housing.

Usually, in any administration, whether it's cute or it's crude, Cabinet members get the leeway in naming their own team members. Defensor is having his team rammed down his throat by Mr. Civil Society or whatever interest groups the person represents.

Maybe Defensor took it as a signal it's time for him to go. As one of the Spice Boys in Congress, who worked hard for the impeachment case againt Wrist Band, Defensor probably outlived his usefulness. He is no longer . . . well, "recyclable."

* * *

THAT the new Commander in Chief already established full control, is also not clear. That's why the stock market is watching how Gloriaetta will use her authority over the issue featuring Rear Adm. Guillermo Wong. Maybe he has a wrong surname. It's short.

That's the guy who wanted to straighten things out in the Marine Corps, whose officers nevertheless did not like how he berated them in front of their own men, who they nevertheless berate all the time in training. Berating is a way of life in the Marines.

But back to Wong, the Marine officers are saying that, because of what he did, he already lost the "moral ascendancy" to lead the Philippine Navy. Look at that—all because of what he said about a couple of officers in one unit of the entire Navy.

Now where did I hear that "moral ascendancy" before? Aha, it was the same line used to kick Wrist Band out of office. Since Wong already lost moral ascendancy, of course the Marine officers also had to . . . well, "withdraw their support." Same same *lang*.

* * *

BUT definitely control is already well established in no-fail money-making outfits of the government. Pagcor. Sweepstakes. In them everything is already under control by the men of First Husband "Just Call Me Mike" Arroyo.

I guess that's just the reaction to the recent pronouncement of Gloriaetta in a recent media forum. She said that, if you use the name of Just Call Me Mike in getting a position, your application goes straight to the wastebasket. Tough words.

Recyled from the wastebasket, the papers of the Pagcor and Sweepstakes top bosses then went back to her desk for signature. Well, precisely, those bosses often boast of "being like this" (middle and index fingers entwined) with Just Call Me Mike.

In other words, in certain areas where control is vital, and this cute administraiton does not even show some morsels of control. In those things where there's a lot of money, billions upon billions of pesos, it seems somebody has everything under control. Lovit!

* * *

RUNNING for senator under the People Power Coalition, although surveys showed that she is not making it to the top 13, former BIR Commissioner Liwayway Chato is trying to win votes with the label "crusader against tax evaders."

All right, admittedly, it's such a catchy slogan that many of us down here don't even know what the hell it really means. *Basta*, she's a "crusader." It means that she went after all those tax evaders against all odds, no matter what!

And how many, pray tell, tax evaders did she crusaded against? Let me see, well, it's a grand total of, er, one and only one, and he is none other than Lucio Tan, whose tax case was the only one filed by Chato during the time of Kuya Eddie. That's a crusader!

To think, she did not even get her man. While a lot of those in big business are evading taxes better than I can evade the bill collectors, Chato concentrated on one case and one alone, and still she failed. That's why I don't buy campaign slogans.

FALSE DISCLOSURE

PSE sets sanction vs RCBC

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE PHILIPPINE Stock Exchange said yesterday it would sanction Rizal Commercial Banking Corp. for a false disclosure on its controversial purchase of credit card firm Bankard Inc. from Equitable PCI Bank.

If slapped the maximum penalty, the country's fifth biggest lender could be removed from the local bourse, a person familiar with the matter told reporters.

RCBC officials were not available for comment.

The PSE has been exerting pressure on RCBC to observe the government's tender offer rules on the Bankard transaction.

In a statement, the stock exchange said it was penalizing RCBC for failing to report a special power of attorney that effectively transferred beneficial ownership of Bankard from Equitable PCI Bank to RCBC's wholly owned subsidiary, RCBC Capital Corp.

"RCBC is also being sanctioned and admonished for deliberately submitting false statements having denied the acquisition of beneficial ownership of Bankard Inc.," it said.

The statement explained that RCBC did not furnish the stock exchange with sufficient material information on the transaction. It said parties to the transaction only disclosed on May 24 last year the signing of an agreement to sell 67 percent of the outstanding shares of Bankard to RCBC Capital.

The RCBC disclosure said the deal was subject to compliance of the parties with closing conditions that were completed only on Dec. 29, 2000.

The stock exchange said it had only recently discovered that under a "special power of attorney and irrevocable proxy," all the rights pertaining to the controlling block of Bankard—such as voting rights, the right to receive dividends and the exercise of management and control of operations—were transferred to RCBC Capital as early as May 24.

The PSE noted that the transfer or rights already constituted transfer of beneficial ownership that, under the law as well as the rules of the Securities and Exchange Commission and the PSE, should be properly disclosed.

"The discovery of the violation was prompted by certain paid advertisements of Bankard Inc., which contained claims that the Yuchengco group of companies and RCBC Capital were its new owners," the statement said.

"In responding to queries from the exchange, RCBC denied beneficial ownership of Bankard by the Yuchengco group. However, it was later found out that the special power of attorney had been executed many months before said denial occurred," it stressed.

RCBC is already under hot water for refusing to comply with the tender offer rules of the new Securities Regulation Code, which requires any person or group of persons intending to acquire at least 15 percent of any listed company or at least 30 percent of such equity over 12 months, to make a tender offer.

RCBC officials, however, explained it was not yet covered by the tender offer rule as the deal was signed before the SRC was passed.

The PSE, however, had adopted the tender offer in its listing rules even before the law was passed.

Music.com teams up with Catcha.com

SEMICONDUCTOR company Music Corp. said yesterday its music portal unit, Music.com Asia Inc., had entered into a strategic partnership with Singapore-based content provider Catcha.com.

Singapore-based Music.com Asia provides Internet users with a range of Asian music content.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange, Music president Michael Burton said the deal would enable Music.com Asia to be featured on all Catcha.com websites.

"Music.com Asia will be exposed to Catcha.com's 85 million monthly page views across five Internet portals," Burton said.

Catcha.com provides Internet content, community activities and e-commerce opportunities in Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand and the Philippines.

Burton said Catcha.com, with its extensive network, could help Music.com Asia reach a wider audience.

"Music.com Asia is committed to being the first point of reference for music on the Internet in Asia," Music.com Asia chief executive Newton Cheng said.

"Catcha.com is the perfect partner to help us achieve this goal. Its presence throughout Southeast Asia, its traffic and focus will help make Music.com Asia the foremost music destination in the region," he said.

"Music.com is a leader in the online music industry and, through Music.com Asia, is becoming a major player in the Asian market. This partnership provides Catcha.com with a premium music product to offer our members and provides Music.com Asia with increased exposure to the Southeast Asia Internet community," Catcha.com chief executive Patrick Grove said.

Music shares closed 15 centavos higher at P2.95.

Music.com Asia is the result of Music.com's acquisition last December of Xudio.com, a leading Singapore-based portal.

CPSD seen falling below ₱145B

By Elena R. Torrijos

THE COUNTRY'S consolidated public sector deficit is expected to be in the unusual position of being less than the national government's projected P145 billion deficit because of surpluses from state-controlled pension funds.

In a new briefing following a speech before the Financial Executives Institute of the Philippines, Budget Secretary Emilia Boncodin told reporters the surpluses of the Social Security System and the Government Service Insurance System would likely offset the deficits of other government-owned and -controlled corporations.

In past years, the country's CPSD outstripped the national government deficit.

Boncodin said the government would finance the deficit primarily through domestic borrowing. She said 76 percent of total borrowings would come from the domestic market while the rest from foreign sources, largely loans from multilateral agencies.

She expressed optimism the borrowing strategy would not lead to a rise in the country's interest rates given the liquidity of the local market.

For foreign loans, she said the government was eyeing from the World Bank $200 million for the Bank Sector Reform Loan and $150 million for the Social Expenditure Loan.

The budget secretary also said the government was considering a $100-million to $200-million Public Sector Reform Loan from the World Bank.

Government was also inclined not to entertain new official development assistance if this would present an added burden to the government. Instead, it would focus on accelerating counterpart funding disbursements for existing ODA projects, she said.

The government is currently grappling with the low disbursement rates of P10.2 billion worth of ODA.

NTC steps up network inspection

THE NATIONAL Telecommunications Commission said yesterday it would conduct "more exhaustive and frequent" inspections of telecommunications companies to address consumers' complaints of poor service.

"We are going to do more exhaustive and frequent investigations," NTC Commissioner Eliseo Rio Jr. told reporters yesterday.

Rio said the commission would conduct the first of these inspections next month.

The NTC currently inspects the facilities of telecommunications companies twice a year. It now hopes to do this every three months or as often as needed.

This move came following complaints from consumers that they were being overcharged as they were being forced to pay for calls that they were unable to complete. Consumers had also been complaining of difficulties in placing calls from one network to another and from mobile phones to landlines.

Anthony O. Alcantara

DISCLOSURES

THE LISTING of the additional 1.7 million common shares of **Lepanto Consolidated Mining Co.** to cover its stock option awards brings the company's total shares to 169.3 million consisting of 101.6 million class "A" and 67.7 million class "B" shares.

* * *

SHARES of **Jollibee Foods Corp.** under its tandem stock purchase and option plan now total 767,938 after the additional listing of 25,449 shares.

* * *

UNIOIL Resources & Holdings Co. Inc. announced the resignation of Juanita Tan as a director of the company.

* * *

EBECOM Holdings Inc. will hold its special stockholders' meeting on March 30, 2 p.m. at the Makati Sports Club. Only stockholders of record as of Feb. 28 are entitled to the notice of and to vote at the meeting.

* * *

BOGO-Medellin Milling Co. Inc. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on April 3, 10 a.m. at the boardroom of company's principal office at Jardine Davies Building, Makati City. Stockholders of record as of Feb. 28 are entitled to notice of and to vote at the meeting. ***Compiled by Maricar D. Tolosa, PDI Research***

Philippine Stock Exchange

(As of Wednesday, February 28, 2001)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Banco Filipino Sav & Mort	107	107	105	106	1,130
Bank of the Phil. Islands	70	70	69	69.5	293,200
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	55.5	55.5	55	55	13,600
First E-Bank Corp.	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.1	20,000
Global Business Bank Inc.	80	80	65	70.5	3,100
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	218	219	216	218	116,670
Philippine National Bank	41	46.5	41	46.5	1,045,400
Union Bank of the Phil.	26	26	26	26	22,000
FINANCIAL SERVICE					
Bankard Inc.	1.58	1.58	1.58	1.58	2,000
Filipino Fund Inc	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	10,000
First Metro Invest. Corp.	250	250	250	250	500
Manulife Financial Corp.	1250	1260	1250	1260	5,640
Sun Life Financial Serv.	1005	1030	1005	1030	26,410
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp	47.5	47.5	47.5	47.5	1,800
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.65	0.65	0.62	0.64	2,340,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	705	725	705	725	543,150
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05	400,000
Liberty Telecoms Holdings	0.49	0.51	0.49	0.51	600,000
Piltel	0.73	0.73	0.7	0.7	70,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	805	805	790	795	109,520
Ivantage Corp.	1.08	1.08	1.06	1.06	1,168,000
Philweb.Com Inc.	0.07	0.07	0.0675	0.0675	231,000,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	53.5	54	53	54	32,800
Manila Electric Co. B	62.5	62.5	61.5	61.5	1,400,300
Petron Corp.	1.88	1.92	1.84	1.86	5,015,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	0.95	0.97	0.95	0.97	50,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.1	1.12	1.1	1.12	374,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	1.32	1.34	1.26	1.28	4,184,000
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc	0.52	0.56	0.52	0.56	20,000
Negros Navigation Co. Inc.	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.19	100,000
William, Gothong & Aboitiz	2	2	2	2	25,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Republic Glass Hldg. Corp.	0.85	0.85	0.85	0.85	660,000
Union Cement Corp.	0.87	0.87	0.87	0.87	14,550,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Cosmos Bottling Corp.	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	35,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	11.75	11.75	11.5	11.5	502,000
La Tondeña Distillers Inc.	38.5	38.5	37.5	37.5	273,900
Pure Foods Corp. A	66	95	66	95	4,200
RFM Corp.	1.3	1.3	1.24	1.24	549,000
San Miguel Corp. A	49.5	50	49	50	86,700
San Miguel Corp. B	59	59	58.5	58.5	132,400
Vitarich Corp.	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	1,690,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.58	0.58	0.55	0.58	60,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg B	0.59	0.59	0.59	0.59	20,000
Ayala Corp.	7.8	7.8	7.7	7.7	938,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	1.58	1.6	1.58	1.58	321,000
Alliance Global Group Inc.	12.25	12.5	12	12	500
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	1	1	0.97	0.97	130,000
A. Soriano Corp.	0.3	0.3	0.29	0.29	350,000
APC Group Inc.	0.23	0.23	0.225	0.225	2,250,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.0065	0.0065	0.006	0.006	35,000,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	2.9	3	2.85	2.85	159,000
Baguio Gold Holdings Corp.	2	2	2	2	34,000
Balabac Resources & Hldgs.	0.36	0.4	0.36	0.4	340,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	13	13	13	13	1,000
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	10,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	3.15	3.15	3.1	3.1	6,446,000
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.19	0.19	0.185	0.185	350,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	0.51	0.51	0.5	0.51	620,000
Fil-Estate Corp.	1	1	1	1	3,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	1.48	1.48	1.38	1.4	1,325,000
First Phil. Hldgs. Corp.	23.25	23.5	23.25	23.5	207,700
Global Equities Inc.	0.35	0.35	0.33	0.34	1,600,000
Ionics Inc.	13.25	13.25	13	13	70,500
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	1,408,000
Macroasia Corp.	2	2	2	2	5,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. A	0.017	0.017	0.017	0.017	3,700,000
Megaworld Corp.	0.9	0.9	0.88	0.89	2,410,000
Mabuhay Holdings Corp.	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.19	30,000
Multitech Inv. Corp.	0.39	0.39	0.39	0.39	990,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.61	0.61	0.6	0.6	2,890,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	510,000
Tanduay Holdings Inc.	5.6	5.6	5.6	5.6	10,000
Unioil Res. & Holdings Co.	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	20,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.38	0.38	0.37	0.38	7,020,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.47	0.47	0.32	0.45	650,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.29	0.3	0.29	0.3	710,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Corro-Coat Inc.	1.42	1.42	1.42	1.42	20,000
Metro Alliance Holdings-B	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	35,000
Music Corp.	3.1	3.1	2.9	2.95	465,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.81	0.81	0.81	0.81	380,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.13	0.13	0.13	0.13	680,000
Reynolds Philippine Corp.	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16	220,000
SPI Technologies Inc.	12.5	12.5	11.25	11.75	1,265,300
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICE					
Belle Corp.	0.62	0.62	0.61	0.61	1,570,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.68	0.68	0.63	0.65	6,960,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	0.69	0.7	0.68	0.68	1,940,000
Manila Jockey Club	20	20	20	20	1,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.34	0.34	0.33	0.33	110,000
Philippine Racing Club	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.3	1,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
Equitable PCI Bank-War	3.9	3.9	3.85	3.9	118,000
Globe Telecom Hldg. (Pdr)	720	720	720	720	980
Jollibee Warrants	11	11.25	11	11.25	10,200
Omico Corp. Warrant	0.003	0.003	0.003	0.003	184,000,000
OTHERS					
Far Eastern University	330	330	330	330	10
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	6.6	6.6	6.4	6.4	4,786,000
C & P Homes Inc.	0.34	0.34	0.32	0.32	5,180,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.46	0.46	0.4	0.4	440,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.41	0.41	0.41	0.41	2,460,000
Edsa Prop. Holdings Inc.	1.22	1.22	1.22	1.22	1,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	2.9	2.9	2.7	2.75	9,113,000
Keppel Phils. Prop. Inc.	1.28	1.28	1.24	1.24	514,000
Philippine Estates Corp.	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.11	200,000
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17	100,000
SM Development Corp.	0.91	0.91	0.91	0.91	40,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	7.2	7.2	7	7.1	11,330,000
Universal Rightfield Prop.	0.115	0.12	0.115	0.12	16,600,000
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	0.0065	0.0065	0.006	0.006	17,000,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc B	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	6,000,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co. B	0.23	0.23	0.23	0.23	100,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	41,000,000
Omico Corp.	0.0042	0.0042	0.004	0.004	120,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	0.235	0.235	0.235	0.235	1,460,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	0.23	0.23	0.23	0.23	100,000
OIL					
Imperial Res.	0.027	0.028	0.027	0.028	1,000,000
Interport Res.	0.0055	0.009	0.0055	0.009	13,000,000
Interport Res. B	0.006	0.006	0.006	0.006	31,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.0048	0.0048	0.0048	0.0048	33,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.0048	0.0048	0.0046	0.0046	125,000,000
Pacifica	0.017	0.017	0.017	0.017	10,500,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	1,400,000
South China Resources Inc.	0.32	0.35	0.32	0.35	220,000
Vulcan Ind'l	0.25	0.25	0.245	0.245	70,000

CURRENCIES

Feb. 28, 2001

Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Foreign currency in US$	Foreign currency in Peso
United States	Dollar	1.088850	1.000000	48.2630
Japan	Yen	0.009380	0.008615	0.4158
United Kingdom	Pound	1.572844	1.444500	69.7159
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.139599	0.128208	6.1877
Switzerland	Franc	0.650137	0.597086	28.8172
Canada	Dollar	0.711946	0.653851	31.5568
Singapore	Dollar	0.625597	0.574548	27.7294
Australia	Dollar	0.570109	0.523588	25.2699
Bahrain	Dinar	2.888350	2.652661	128.0254
Kuwait	Dinar	N/A	N/A	N/A
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.290329	0.266638	12.8687
Brunei	Dollar	0.622627	0.571821	27.5978
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000111	0.000102	0.0049
Thailand	Baht	0.025470	0.023392	1.1290
UAE	Dirham	0.296487	0.272294	13.1417
Korea	Won	0.000872	0.000801	0.0387
Euro	Euro	1.000000	0.918400	44.3247
Germany	Mark	0.511291	0.46957	22.6629
France	Franc	0.152450	0.140009	6.7573
Netherlands	Guilder	0.453780	0.416752	20.1137
Austria	Schilling	0.072673	0.066743	3.2212
Belgium	Franc	0.024790	0.022767	1.0988
Italy	Lire	0.000516	0.000474	0.0229
Finland	Markka	0.168188	0.154464	7.4549
Portugal	Escudo	0.004988	0.004581	0.2211
Spain	Peseta	0.006010	0.00552	0.2664
Luxemburg	Franc	0.024790	0.022767	1.0988
Ireland	Punt	1.269738	1.166127	56.2808

RP may become Asia's piracy capital, says AOL

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

AMERICAN media and Internet giant AOL Time Warner yesterday warned that the Philippines could well emerge as Asia's piracy capital if the Macapagal administration would not step up efforts to stop the proliferation of bootlegged music and video CDs.

Hugh L. Stephens, AOL-Time Warner vice president for public policy in Asia-Pacific, said music and video pirates have been slowly shifting their base of operations into the Philippines after governments of other Asian countries toughened up on their intellectual property rights (IPR) rules and booted violators out of their lairs.

"Some syndicates have been putting up shops here because the Philippines is offering the least resistance among Asian countries to these pirates. It is perceived as the weak link in the region in terms of stepping up anti-piracy efforts and this is not good for the country's image," Stephens said.

Music and video piracy has grown dramatically in the last two years as indicated by the proliferation and open selling of fake music CDs and bootlegged copies of Hollywood films even in the country's major shopping malls.

"I just went to Greenhills and bought a VCD copy of the film 'Sweet November' which opened in US cinemas just three days ago," said Stephens who is part of the visiting US-Asean Business Council.

Oracle Philippines managing director Bernard Yu concurred with Stephens' view that bootleggers have toned down their mass reproduction of CD-ROMs and focused their resources on making more fake movies and music after government clamped down on the illegal use of software programs.

He said this alarming trend, if not checked soon, could push the Philippines on top of the list of Washington's watchlist of leading IPR violators.

"The problem in the Philippines is not the lack of laws but the inability to enforce these laws. We have asked the Philippine government to allocate more funds to beef up its crackdown on these pirates," Stephens said.

He stressed that the piracy problem is not only hurting multinational corporations but it is also affecting the local entertainment industry. Stephens said attendance in local movie theaters has dropped by 50 percent over the last four years due the unfettered sale of these illicit copies of movies.

Although Stephens declined to comment on whether the government's weak enforcement of IPR laws would have an impact on the American firm's future plans in the Philippines, he said AOL-Time Warner takes into consideration a country's record in controlling piracy in all of its overseas investments.

Stephens said AOL has established a call center at the Clark special economic zone (which currently employs 1,000 Filipinos) while Time Warner has established a local subsidiary, Warner Music Philippines, to find and market local singing talents.

Heartened by the successful transfer of its US backroom operations in the country, America On-Line had earlier expressed plans of transferring its support services in the UK, Australia and Hong Kong to Clark.

NEW PNOC PRESIDENT AND CEO

Incoming Philippine National Oil Co. president and CEO Ambassador Thelmo Y. Cunanan receives from outgoing president and CEO Antonio Lopa the ceremonial flag of the PNOC during turnover rites held recently. Cunanan vowed to operate by the Macapagal administration's policy of transparency, level playing field and ethical and moral standards of public service. Witnessing the event is incoming PNOC chair Sergio Apostol, former lead prosecutor at the Senate impeachment trial.

PAL, airport firms want Naia deal junked

ANGELES CITY—Philippine Airlines and the major airport services corporations at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport are seeking the termination of the terminal development and operation contract entered into by former President Ramos with the Philippine International Air Terminals Co. Inc. (Piatco) in 1997.

In a meeting with leaders of the Pinoy Gumising Ka Movement (PGKM) and Move Clark Now (MCN) recently, officials of PAL, Manila Integrated Airport Services Corp. and MacroAsia Corp. said their companies would oppose the implementation of the Piatco contract.

PAL and the publicly listed MacroAsia Corp. are both controlled by business tycoon Lucio Tan.

The Piatco contract provides for the design, construction and operation of the NAIA Terminal 3.

The $551-million (P26.44 billion) project is designed to accommodate a maximum annual capacity of 13.1 million passengers. It will be undertaken on a build-operate-transfer basis under a 25-year concession agreement between the government and Piatco.

Jovino Lorenzo Jr., Miascor director, said 12 aviation-related services at NAIA, including Miascor and MacroAsia, would submit a position paper to President Macapagal-Arroyo to formally ask the termination of the Piatco contract.

He said the contract was "onerous and disadvantageous" to the government and the business interests of other aviation-related companies.

"We don't agree that the Piatco contract is already a done deal. It merits review of the incumbent administration because it was a wrong decision by the previous administrations and even made onerous by ousted President Joseph Estrada. President Macapagal should address this issue," Lorenzo said.

He said the contract obligates the Philippine government to assume the responsibility of paying the debts of Piatco if the latter fails to pay its obligations to its creditors. He said the contract, as amended by Estrada in December 1999, also states that the government will have to provide access facilities to and from the NAIA Terminal 3.

He said the Piatco contract bars all the other airport companies from servicing airlines at NAIA Terminal 3.

"Only the sister-company of Piatco, the Philippine Airport Ground Services, will monopolize the services there," he said.

Reynaldo Munsayac, vice president for finance and administration of MacroAsia, said Tan has always been opposed to the NAIA Terminal 3 project because Piatco's exclusive right in the facility will have an adverse effect to both PAL and MacroAsia.

PLDT, Bayantel sign service agreements

RIVAL fixed line carriers Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. and Bayan Telecommunications Inc. have signed service agreements to resolve issues relating to operations and maintenance.

"One of the agreements defines the process for reporting, testing and resolving any technical problem affecting the normal telecommunications traffic flowing through the interconnection facilities between Bayantel and PLDT networks," Bayantel, owned by conglomerate Benpres Corp., said in a statement.

The other agreement provided guidelines "for the provisioning of required interconnection facilities through adoption of common traffic parameters and forecasting methodology," it said.

Elizabeth Locsin, Bayantel's vice president for corporate accounts management, said this deal would allow the company to provision for interconnection facilities a quarter in advance, helping to reduce traffic congestion problems.

The company also said it would ask the Supreme Court to reconsider a recent ruling by the Court of Appeals to nullify its mobile phone license.

Meantime, in the launching of INQ7 Tuesday, PLDT president Manuel V. Pangilinan said the company has allotted P10 to P12 billion for its capital expenditure program this year.

The amount, he said, would be used to finance the company's telephone rollout, Internet data center and the development of its submarine fiber optic cable facilities.

"We are going to build a fixed line network that is as dense as possible," he said.

At present, PLDT has a 2.6-million subscriber capacity for fixed lines with about 2 million subscribed lines. This year the company plans to increase its capacity by 100,000 to 200,000 lines in order to handle more subscribers.

Pangilinan said the prepaid landline service of PLDT, or Teletipid, did very well as it contributed 50 percent of the subscriber take-up for fixed lines last year. He refused to give specific figures pending the disclosure of the company's 2000 financial results to the Philippine Stock Exchange.

US investors seen coming in after May elections

AMERICAN businessmen are likely to make their investment moves into the country after the May elections when the country's political situation is expected to stabilize.

US-Asean Business Council Inc. president Ernest Z. Bower said the American investments should start flowing in by the third quarter this year. "Businessmen want to be assured of a stable environment before making any investment commitments," Bower said.

Aside from the national elections, the Supreme Court should have finally resolved the issue on the legitimacy of the Macapagal administration by the second half this year.

Bower led a 41-member delegation composed of senior executives of top American companies on a five-day visit to the Philippines to assess President Macapagal-Arroyo and her Cabinet's strategy for restoring economic growth following the ouster of former President Estrada in January.

Bower said the mission members were encouraged by what they have gathered so far with their meetings with top government officials. "The government has an excellent economic team in place. If the government is able to put in place its economic programs, we believe the Philippines can emerge as a premiere investment site in Asean."

However, Bower said the mission members have not made any firm commitment to invest in the Philippines in the near term, explaining that this was not the purpose of his visit.

The American businessmen lobbied the Macapagal administration on several economic concerns particularly the passage of the power reform bill, enactment of a bill granting more fiscal incentives to investors, enhancement of agriculture productivity and rural development, development of telecommunication infrastructure, enhancement of its customs operation, refinement of its trade rules, reaffirmation of its commitment to participate in the Asean Free Trade Area by 2004, and step up on anti-piracy campaign.

Bower said US exports to the Philippines rose 22 percent to $9 billion last year while its imports from the Philippines rose 13 percent to $14 billion. Although US investments have ballooned to $3.8 billion from $1.4 billion in the 1990s, Bower noted that the Philippines was at the low-end of US investments to the region.

Bower said that Asean's share of US investments has shrunk from 60 percent to 40 percent as more Americans put their capital to China and India which have bigger markets. *Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.*

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Inflation risk stirs in Asia

SINGAPORE—Central banks across Asia are easing monetary policy in an attempt to stave off the adverse impact of the US economic slowdown, but inflation is stirring.

This is causing something of a dilemma for some central banks and analysts say there is scope for prices to rise toward the higher end of official targets.

High oil prices, the possible return of the crop damaging El Niño weather pattern and the rebuilding of balance sheet margins post-crisis are all real inflation risks for Asia.

There is also the risk a short-sharp economic slowdown in the US will lead to a V-shaped recovery and with it an upturn in prices as consumer confidence—now at a 4.5-year low returns.

"Inflation might not be a cause for panic right now, but there is definitely no room for complacency either. Risks are greatly reduced, but not dead," said Song Seng Wun, regional economist at GK Goh.

"Singapore's recent move to keep its gradual tightening stance unchanged indicated the government might still see a threat of inflation on the horizon," he said.

Asian Consumer Prices (% year/year)

	Nov	Dec	Jan
Indonesia	9.12	9.35	8.28
Malaysia	1.90	1.40	1.50
Philippines	6.00	6.60	6.90
Singapore	2.00	2.10	2.00
South Korea	2.60	3.20	4.20
Taiwan	2.26	1.66	2.36
Thailand	1.70	0.20	1.30

Distorted picture

If anything, tame inflation last year was caused by direct or indirect government meddling, and the full impact of expensive oil might be felt this year.

Thailand, for example, subsidized energy costs for farmers and fishermen, postponed electricity rate increases, and capped gas prices last year.

Most of these programs have expired and electricity and gas prices are expected to be revised up by the first quarter.

Indonesia, under pressure from the International Monetary Fund, might be forced to end large subsidies on fuel by April, a move which could push petrol prices up by 20 percent.

Economists polled by Reuters forecast Philippine inflation could jump to 7.43 percent this year from 4.44 percent last year due to the weak peso, high oil prices and disruptive weather.

Supply-side threats

Oil prices are obviously a big factor and most expect them to come off the heady levels seen over the past year.

But it is possible brewing Middle East tension and Opec's determination to keep supply snug will keep prices high much longer than expected by the market.

"The market is thinking that oil and gas is a short-term problem . . . world demand comes down and oil prices should fall. I think this is a misreading of where we are going," said Harald Malmgren, head of US-based consultancy company Malmgren Group.

He expects a $25-$30 per barrel range this year. The price was quoted around $28 per barrel on Wednesday.

Opec said recently there was "almost a conviction" among producers for an output cut ahead of a forecast drop in demand in the second quarter.

Meanwhile, meteorologists predict El Niño, the Pacific weather phenomenon blamed for causing drought in Southeast Asia in 1998, is likely to return this year.

"It is about four years since the last one. From a statistical assessment, one would have to start thinking that there is a probability of one occurring now," said United Nations weather expert Michael Coughlan.

"We will perhaps see a clearer picture in the next few months," he said.

Fed underwriting stocks?

There is not a major risk of demand push inflation as Asia's consumer confidence remains depressed and the threat of unemployment keeps savings ratios high, according to contrarian economists.

But the "wealth effect" caused by rising stock markets could have a knock-on impact on consumer demand and to some extent negate the overall lack of confidence.

Also, it appears the Federal Reserve is taking a similar stance as it did in autumn 1998. By cutting interest rates seemingly in response to pressure on stock markets, it might create a notion that it is putting a floor under share prices.

As in Asia this could spark a degree of consumer confidence not matched by the underlying economic fundamentals, the economists said. *Reuters*

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People, Events & Products

ARIES ESPINOSA, Asst. Editor

New tools for convention organizers

I-QUEST Corp., the leading provider of broadband Internet solutions for the travel industry, and Reed Travel & Meetings (Asia) recently unveiled an exciting new range of products for event planners and others in the convention industry at Asia-Pacific Incentives and Meetings Expo 2001. The joint online B2B destination (www.worldroomevents.com) targets event planners, meeting organizers, suppliers and others in the fast-growing meetings, incentives, exhibition and convention (MICE) industry worldwide.

Visitors to AIME 2001 viewed these invaluable services at Booths 2506 & 2507 at the Melbourne Convention Centre Feb. 20-21, which included live, on-line demonstrations. WorldroomEvents offers information, online tools and e-commerce to help organize and manage events of all sizes and in any venue. It features site search and selection services and comprehensive information on MICE destinations, conference centers and hotels worldwide.

"Our goal is to build an online community of MICE professionals by providing online tools, focused industry content, professional information and a wide range of choice of suppliers," said Tina Nepomuceno-Di Cicco, president of WorldroomEvents. "That way we create a rich sales and marketing venue where MICE suppliers and buyers can do their business on line."

WorldroomEvents has a database of more than 1,500 venues and facilities, mainly from the Asia-Pacific and Europe. It offers a search engine with pre-set criteria, enabling interactive RFPs (requests for proposal) exactly tailored to the planner's requirement.

Those organizing several meetings in different locations have access to a vital WorldroomEvents checklist with reminder service, expense tracker and currency converter.

"By combining Reed's media expertise and extensive networking in the MICE market and I-Quest's online and technology leadership, we are creating a one-stop resource on line that will help define the future of event planning," said Fiona Rankine, publishing director of Reed Travel & Meetings (Asia). WorldroomEvents offers sellers graduated directory listing options and RFP reception via e-mail, giving event facilities and suppliers the opportunity to sell to event planners. Event suppliers such as hotels and other venues get free listings where they can customize their unique Web sites. A range of exposure and advertising packages gives venues flexibility in customizing their site, such as including images, floor plans, virtual tours and promotional rates.

This comprehensive information platform is presented to a global audience, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. In addition to industry news from Reed, WorldroomEvents is supported by content from Worldroom.com; I-Quest's business traveler portal regarded as one the most comprehensive resources on the Web.

NEW CORPORATE SITE

In anticipation of the new and sustainable growth in its business interests, Edward Keller Philippines recently broke ground at the Carmelray Industrial Park I, Canlubang, Laguna. The groundbreaking ceremony paves the way for the construction of a new corporate site that will put Edward Keller's businesses in technology, chemical and specialties and food ingredients under one roof. The new facility will act as a center for excellence, offering support to food ingredients operations in the Asia-Pacific region. Among those who attended the groundbreaking are (from left) Andreas U. Brechbühl, president and CEO of Edward Keller Philippines; Jean-Daniel de Schaller, member of the board of Diethelm Keller Holding Ltd.; Andreas W. Keller, chair of Diethelm Keller Holding Ltd.; Roberto Jose L. Castillo, president of Carmelray Holdings Inc.; and Reynaldo V. Improgo, legal officer of the Municipality of Calamba.

VILLA ALEGRIA GRAND LAUNCH

Villa Alegria on Camarin Road in Caloocan City, an exclusive community with 70 villa-style townhomes with complete facilities and lavish landscaping, was opened to interested buyers by leading property developer Crown Asia. Shown during the opening and blessing ceremonies are Crown Asia officials led by CEO Marcelino C. Mendoza, chief operating officer Edgardo Santos and marketing head Red Rosales, joined by the firm's business partners, property consultants, sales managers and their respective clients. For more information call 726-0083 or visit www.crownasia.com.ph.

Ranao Jaycees promote Marawi housing

THINGS are looking up for war-affected Muslim areas. Young entrepreneurs in the only Islamic City in the country are gearing up for proposals such as mass housing to address refugee aid.

Secretary Michael Defensor of the Housing Development Commission (HUDDC) will visit the city upon the invitation of incoming Ranao Jaycees president and local telecom manager Cairoden Pacasum, who called on the national government to support development programs in Lanao Del Sur.

Defensor will speak before young Muslim professionals in the Ranao Jaycess Induction to be held on March 31.

Pacasum further lauds Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's appointment of Datumanong to the Department of Public Works and Highways as "a bold step towards the economic upliftment of our people."

Many Maranao locals see the Datumanong appointment as timely because major related projects are needed in Mindanao. Marawi is currently beset by a major public works problem as the Agus Bridge linking the city's communities to the commercial area had fallen a year ago. An estimated P25 million is needed to renovate the bridge.

The Ranao Jaycees was founded Oct. 17, 1998 at the MSU Resort Hotel. Founding president Almen Asum (assistant regional director of DOTC-Region 10) defines the organization's impact as a "major step for young professionals seeking leadership in the fight against poverty."

Lanao del Sur's capital Marawi City is predominated by Muslim Maranaos, many engaged in business and schooling in the Mindanao State University. The city is more popularly known as a bastion of culture, being the land of "hand-woven malongs and antiques."

PWU homecoming

THE PHILIPPINE Women' University Alumni Association is holding its 1st grand reunion for the new millennium on March 4, Sunday at the Old PWU campus on Taft Avenue, Conrado and Francisca Benitez Halls from 1 p.m. to 6 p.m. This year's theme is "Pagyamanin Ang Pamana." Graduates of years ending in 1 and 6 are this year's jubilarians. All graduates and friends of PWU are enjoined to attend. Raffle prizes await lucky winners. For inquiries and reservations, please call the PWU Alumnae Relations Office, Erlinda Cano Chincuanco (c/o Marilyn) at 526-8433. For tickets, call Alice Lonzame Lopena at 926- 9312 and Marissa Enriquez (c/o Beth) at 415-3118.

New Zealand beef free of BSE

LYING in the southwest Pacific, New Zealand is a long mountainous country surrounded by a large expanse of ocean. A very high ratio of land to people means that New Zealand is one of the least densely populated countries in the world, allowing it to be free of problems such as crowding, pollution, and poor sanitation.

Cattle in New Zealand are reared in the fresh, open outdoors, on a diet of abundant green grass. Food supplements, common elsewhere in the world, are unnecessary in New Zealand as grass is available all year round. Major animal diseases are unknown in New Zealand. A combination of geographical isolation and strict quarantine laws have contributed to New Zealand's unique herd health record and has prevented the entry of Foot and Mouth Disease, or BSE (bovine spongiform encephalopothy), into the country..

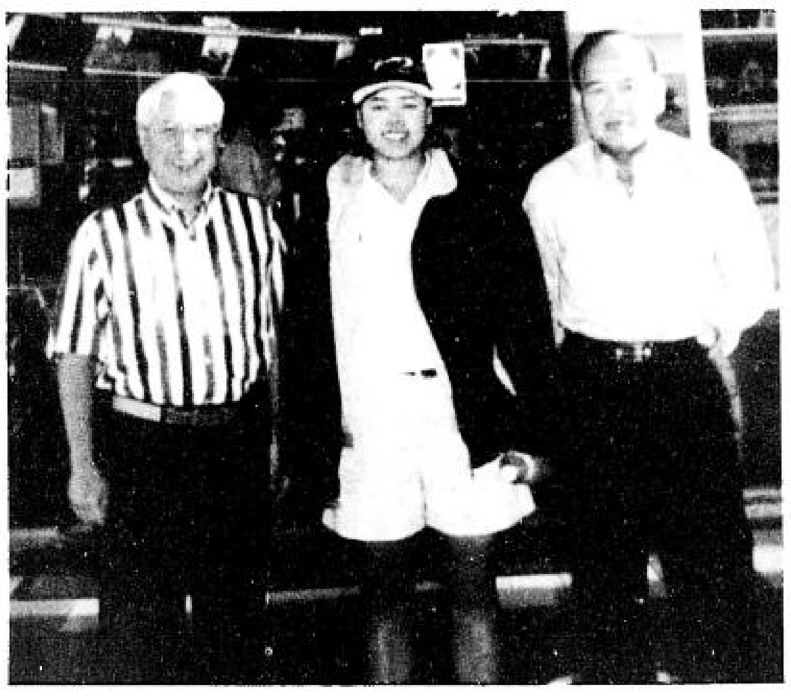
There has been a ban on imported cattle from Britain since 1988 and New Zealand does not allow the importation of meat and bone meal for feeding to livestock, and has not done so for decades.

The European Commission's Scientific Steering Committee (SSC) has carried out assessments of the Geographical BSE-Risk (GBR) of 23 countries, and New Zealand has received the highest status - being the lowest risk category and defined as "highly unlikely." New Zealand's meat processors have embraced the principles of HACCP (Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points) as a means of achieving food safety. This is an international process control and quality assurance system developed initially by the NASA to ensure food safety for astronauts.

Only beef patties from New Zealand are used by Philking Restaurants Development Corp., franchise holder of Burger King in the Philippines, following the exceptionally high standards of food and product safety of Burger King Corporation for its franchisees worldwide.

NEW HOMEOWNER

LBC Express, the country's foremost local air courier company and the undisputed "Hari ng Padala" for 50 years now, recently celebrated its golden anniversary by awarding three lucky customers with a brand new two-storey house and lot each in Citta Italia, Molino, Bacoor, Cavite. The new homeowner, Jennifer Susa Macapagal (right) receives the key to her brand new house from Judy Pascua, LBC VP for international services.



SHELL SELECT WELCOMES DELASIN

Shell Select hosted a welcome party for Filipino golfer Dorothy Delasin, 2000 Philippine Sportswriter Association's nominated Athlete of the Year (center), at the Shell Magallanes service station. Delasin was recognized for her outstanding performance in the U.S. Ladies Professional Golf Association tour last year and for winning the 2000 Rolex Rookie of the Year award. Delasin's visit to the Philippines is in line with the Shell companies in the Philippines' commitment to support outstanding Filipino athlete's quest for sports excellence. With Delasin are Shell country chair Oscar S. Reyes (left) and Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corporation vice president for corporate affairs Reynaldo D. Gamboa.

Travel Tour Expo 2001 opens

THE BIGGEST travel event in the country opens tomorrow at the SM Megatrade Hall in Mandaluyong. The Travel tour Expo 2001, now on its 8th year, is a banner project of the Philippine Travel Agencies Association (PTAA) and is expected to be a big boost to the country's tourism industry, with this year's theme "Shaping the Future... Today."

Opening ceremonies kick off at 10 a.m. with the ribbon-cutting participated in by Department of Tourism Secretary Richard Gordon, Mandaluyong City Mayor Benhur Abalos, MMDA Chair Benjamin Abalos and PTAA President Ricky Ordoñez.

Showcasing the best of domestic and international tourism, the Travel Tour Expo 2001 will feature 207 exhibition booths offering a whole range of travel options at super-discounted prices available only for the duration of the expo.

A line up of exciting and fun-filled activities including embassy fora, debates, entertainment, games, cultural presentations, and expensive raffle prizes are in store for all visitors. Prizes will also be given to the Best Booth, the Most Popular Booth and the Best in Marketing Effort.

BANK INAUGURATION

President Macapagal-Arroyo, Caloocan City mayor Rey Malonzo and Philippine Business Bank (PBB) chair Alfredo M. Yao lead the candle lighting ceremony during the inauguration of Philippine Business Bank, (the thrift banking unit of Zest-O group) corporate headquarters at Rizal Avenue Extension corner 8th Avenue Caloocan City. Witnessing the ceremonies are the other principal sponsors and officials of the bank.

DONATION TO ANGEL'S HOME

Family First Inc. marketing manager Patrick Cleary turns over their donation of boxes of milk and laundry soap to the children of Angel's Home Foundation in Caloocan City.

BITS & Clips

SSC homecoming

"BASTENG-BASTE" alumni homecoming will be on March 17, 2001 at the San Sebastian College campus. Outstanding Sebastinians are expected to grace the affair, such as Oscar Orbos, Sec. Roilo Golez, Gov. Chavit Singson, and Eddie Gutierrez. All graduates of SSC Manila from the 40s to the year 2000, from the elementary to all college departments, the Institute of Law and Business Administration are enjoined to attend. The Secretariat is open for calls and inquiries from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Call Jedmark, Mayann, Mau, Stef and Arlene, at 733-5098 and 734-8931 local 164.

Mercury Drug launches 'Project OBLLG'

MERCURY Drug, the country's largest pharmaceutical retail chain will launch its third annual "Operation Bigay Lunas-Libreng, Gamutan (OBLLG)" on Thursday, March 1, to coincide with its 56th founding anniversary. Project OBLLG will give away free medicine packs and medical consultations to some 2,000 beneficiaries in 47 cities and municipalities nationwide. With the assistance of business partners and LGUs, Project OBLLG has benefited as many as 65,440 patients last year alone. This year's OBLLG project is being supported by Unilever Philippines.

PARTNERS FOR SOCIAL PROJECTS

Philip Morris Philippines (PMPh) managing director George Farah shakes the hand of Philippine Business for Social Progress (PBSP) president Ma. Luisa Y. Perez-Rubio after signing a memorandum of agreement on the implementation of some P3.5 million worth of reforestation and school building projects in the North. PBSP will act as the implementing arm of PMPh for both projects, which are designed to benefit the families of the tobacco growing communities. This PMPh contribution is part of Philip Morris' philosophy to support worthy social, educational and environmental projects in countries where it operates. Looking on are PMPh corporate affairs director Renato T. Salud and PBSP operations director Eden Garde.

MOTORING

CESAR D. MANGAWANG, Editor

Campi: SKD importation bane to auto industry

BY TESSA R. SALAZAR

THE CHAMBER of Automotive Manufacturers of the Philippines Inc. voiced out its opposition to the importation of semi-knocked down units.

In its Feb. 26 appeal to Trade and Industry Secretary Manuel Roxas II, Campi stressed thát more than the legal downside that the SKD importation posed, any approval of SKD units importation will deny the local parts makers substantial market for their components. Campi president Vicente T. Mills Jr. added that this is "directly in conflict" and "completely irreconcilable" with the objective of the government to promote the development of the local parts industry.

The Campi appeal was provoked by newspaper reports that said Malacañang was reviewing a pending application of Ford Motor Co. Philippines to import 2,000 SKD units of its compact sports utility vehicle Ford Escape.

Though an SKD unit is almost as whole as a completely built-up (CBU) unit—minus the battery and the tires—an SKD unit is not charged the same 30-percent tariff rate CBUs are charged. Instead, SKDs are charged the same tariff rates of CKDs (completely knocked down units)—from 7 to 10 percent.

Mills said in a statement that the industry was greatly alarmed by the (Ford) SKD importation and stressed the automotive organization maintains its position that SKD importation is devoid of any legal basis.

"The government only allowed importation of SKDs during the early years of the Motor Vehicle Development Program to allow new program participants to jump-start their operation but this authority was limited to a period of six months and renewable for another six months," said Mills. He added that the authority was also subject to other conditions such as the eventual shift to CKD assembly operation based on a well-defined timeframe.

Mills, who is also the president of the Philippine Automotive Federation Inc., lodged a January 2001 appeal to President Macapagal-Arroyo in reaction to former Executive Secretary Ronaldo Zamora's approval of Norkis Automotive Resources Corp.'s importation of SKD units of Chrysler vehicles. Scheduled Chrysler vehicles to be imported are 1,000 units for 2001; 2,500 units for 2002; and 3,500 units for 2003.

Campi and Pafi cited Memorandum Order 473 that amended Memorandum Order 346 on April 8, 1998 where guidelines for importation of SKD units were deleted. Mills said the obvious intent of this amendment was to disallow from that time on the importation of SKD units.

Campi pointed out that approving an SKD import authority would deprive the government of "much-needed revenue at this time of gargantuan budget deficit." SKDs are seen to represent a substantial revenue loss because of a significantly lower tariff rate.

A Feb. 26 INQUIRER report stated that Roxas defended the SKD importation, saying it is a means to level the playing field.

Campi is an association of automotive manufacturers that include Asian Carmakers Corp., Columbian Autocar Corp., Commercial Motors Corp., Honda Cars Philippines Inc., and Isuzu Philippines Corp.

Other auto manufacturer members are Italcar Pilipinas Inc., Mitsubishi Motors Philippines Corp., Nissan Motor Philippines Inc., Pilipinas Hino Inc., Proton Pilipinas Corp., Scandinavian Motors Corp., Toyota Motor Philippines Corp., Transfarm Co. Inc and Universal Motors Corp.

Honda puts new fuel cell car to the test

TOKYO—Honda Motor Co. will begin road testing a new version of its FCX-V3 fuel cell vehicle, equipped with Honda-developed fuel stacks.

Honda began testing the FCX-V3 with Ballard Power Systems fuel cells on public roads in November last year, as part of California Fuel Cell Partnership.

Honda has developed the performance and reliability of its fuel cell stack for road testing of the FCX-V3. The California tests are designed to help Honda verify the market feasibility of the fuel cell technologies.

The FCX-V3 with Honda PC Stack seats four people and features the startup performance and quiet operation of the FCX-V3.

It is also equipped with an ultracapacitor, which contributes to improved startup speed and acceleration performance as well as highly efficient energy management. Like earlier versions, the Honda PC Stack FCX-V3 is fueled by hydrogen stored under high pressure.

The California Fuel Cell Partnership is a joint-participation project that includes the California Air Resources Board, private petroleum companies, car manufacturers and fuel cell stack manufacturers.

The partnership was established to investigate the future prospects of fuel-cell vehicles, including infrastructure and mass production.

'BEST DRESSED BIKE'

S.C. Kymco Pilipinas, the local maker of Kymco Scooters and motorcycles held over the weekend the 1st Kymco Riders' Fest at The Fort. The annual event is a reunion of the Kymco family of riders and their loved ones hosted by Kymco president Manuel Sta. Cruz, right. More than 300 Kymco riders shared a night of games, races and fireworks. Raymond Tan, a proud owner of a Dink 150 LX, won the "best-dressed bike" contest.

Want to try a nonpaper oil filter?

BY VERNON B. SARNE

EVERY now and then, a new product arrives and taunts our imagination. You're probably thinking of computers and gadgets, but many products in the auto industry are just as interesting. For instance, how would you like to fit your vehicle with an oil filter that is not made from paper but from stainless metal?

C-Com Phils. is introducing to the Philippine market the world's first nonpaper oil filter. Designed and made in Korea, Power Long stainless mesh oil filters are said to have a better filtering efficiency than paper because of their uniform pore size. They are made by weaving 0.36 mm vertical wires with 0.25 horizontal wires to form a regular pore size of 65 microns. The Korea-based Good Luck Industry Co., which manufactures Power Long oil filters, says that paper, in contrast, has inconsistent pore sizes that vary from 25 to 250 microns, significantly contributing to clogging.

The innovative oil filter certainly looks well-made. From the rubber seals to the relief valve, the product boasts quality assembly.

Another advantage of Power Long oil filters over the ordinary paper commonly used is their environment-friendliness. While the manufacture of paper filter produces toxic chemicals like dioxin, Power Long filters produce very minimal harmful substances, C-Com Phils. claims.

Power Long oil filters were officially launched in Korea lást year. There are 13 different models that fit almost every Japanese car, gasoline or diesel. These new oil filters, C-Com Phils. says, are very popular in Korea and have now also entered Japan, boasting patents in both markets. Those interested to try the product may call up C-Com Phils. at 634-3717 or 633-4677.

No to another Citra hijack

ON THE ROAD

Aida Sevilla-Mendoza

LOOK out! The folks who inflicted the exclusive E-Pass lanes on Southern Luzon Expressway (SLEX) motorists are about to hassle the motoring public again. Citra Metro Manila Tollways Corp. has filed a petition with the Toll Regulatory Board (TRB) for a 300-percent increase in SLEX toll rates.

As if the traffic chaos and misery created by its dedicated E-Pass lane scheme were not enough, Citra is planning another squeeze play. Citra wants to jack up its toll rates so high that a one-way trip by car from Nichols to Alabang, or vice versa, would cost P75 instead of P22.50. For Class 2 vehicles, the toll for traveling the same distance will go up to P190 from P34 while for Class 3 vehicles, it will be P300 instead of P67.50.

To justify its proposed hijacking of the motoring public, Citra cites the decline of the peso that has multiplied the cost of servicing its dollar-denominated loans. But why the 300-percent toll rate increase, when the foreign exchange value of the peso has not dropped by even half that much? Perhaps Citra is asking for the moon in the hope that the TRB will grant a smaller toll rate increase, such as 100 percent.

But Citra does not deserve a toll rate increase, whether it be 100, 50 or 25 percent. The first time Citra sought a toll rate increase in 1999, it promised to upgrade its services and improve traffic flow on the SLEX if its petition were granted. The TRB granted Citra's petition but traffic on the SLEX got worse instead of getting better, especially after Citra decided to ram the dedicated E-Pass lane down the throats of toll-paying motorists.

Citra closed off exit lanes to toll-paying motorists and converted them to dedicated E-Pass lanes for the exclusive use of E-Pass subscribers, who make up only a minority (nearly 28,000, if Citra is to be believed) out of the hundreds of thousands of motorists who use the SLEX. The dedicated E-Pass lane scheme is part of Citra's marketing strategy to "encourage" cash users to subscribe to its overpriced E-Pass. The more appropriate verb is "coerce" since Citra has made it impossible for motorists to exit the SLEX conveniently unless they have the E-Pass. With this scheme, Citra may succeed in hassling some long-suffering motorists into buying the E-Pass, but in the process it is aggravating traffic jams on the SLEX as long lines of vehicles squeeze into the exit lane left open to them while the dedicated E-Pass lane remains practically empty.

Citra can't seem to realize that as long as it sells the E-Pass tag at an inflated price and insists on collecting an annual tag renewal fee, the majority of motorists won't buy it because they feel they're being fleeced. The exclusive E-Pass lane scheme only antagonizes them further and may generate a boycott of the E-Pass. To regain the goodwill of the motoring public, Citra could sell the E-Pass tag at a nominal cost, such as P50, and give a discount for the upfront payment made by E-Pass buyers to load the tag since this is payment in advance. Or Citra could give away E-Pass tags free of charge and watch the money roll in as hundreds of thousands of free E-Pass holders regularly pay a minimum of P500 each to load their E-Pass cards.

As one INQUIRER website reader from the San Francisco Bay Area e-mailed to this columnist, it takes time for motorists to accept a new concept of payment. Dedicating lanes for this new concept without giving the public time to adjust to and accept it, is too drastic. Several years ago, California Transportation Agency (Caltrans) installed a similar system called Fast Track lanes on the Bay Area bridges. At first, it was a flop as hardly anyone passed through the Fast Track toll gates while cars lined up for miles at the

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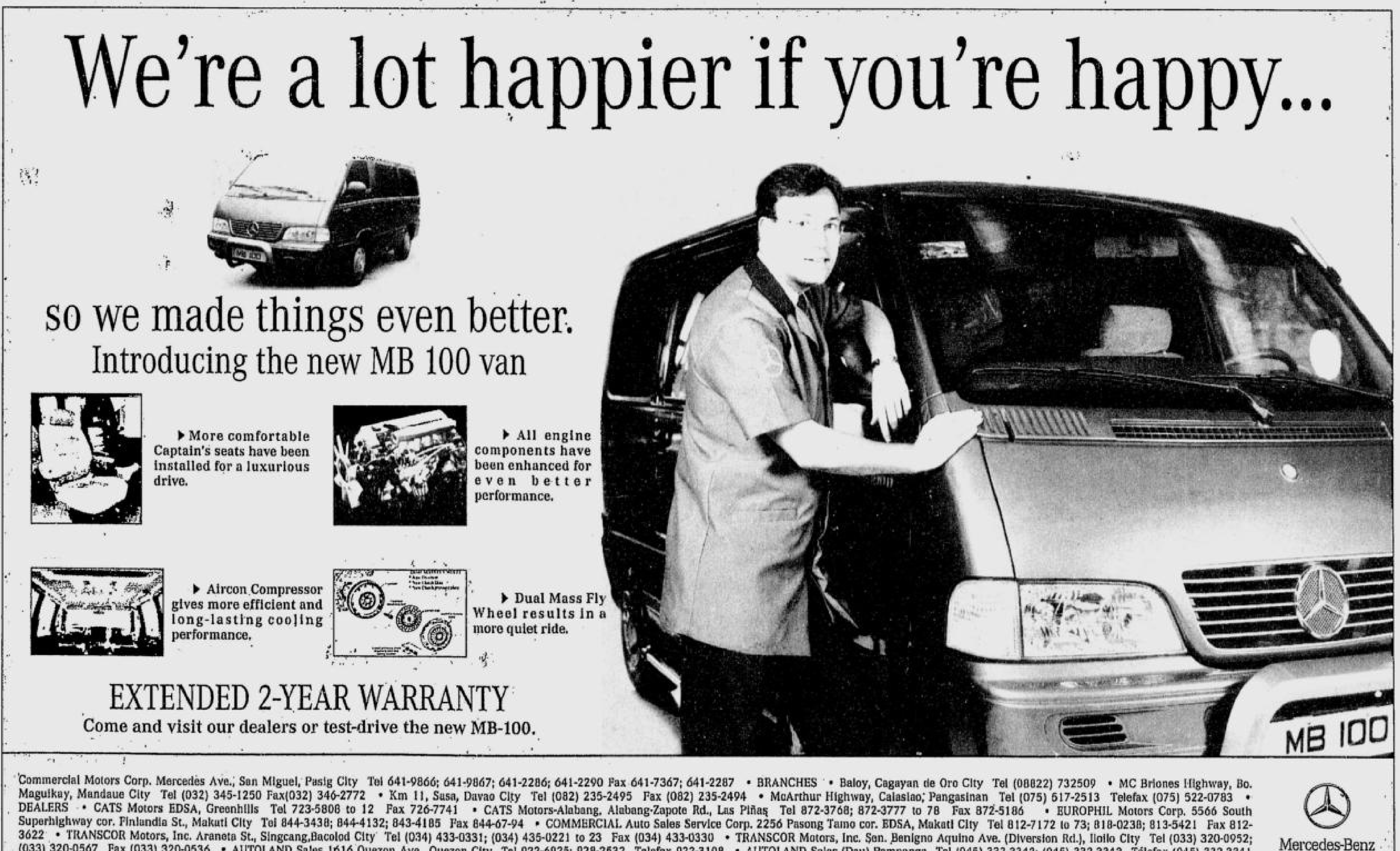

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Volvo Cars sets its sight on 4th straight year of profitable growth

ACHIEVING continuous profitable growth is one of the most important challenges facing Volvo Cars. Company president Hans-Olov Olsson can look back on success in fulfilling that aim in the past year. "We have recorded both quantitative and financial improvements for the third year in succession. Our aim is naturally to continue to grow with increased profitability in 2001 as well," says Olsson.

Since the Ford Motor Co. does not publish results for each subsidiary company, the Volvo Car Corp.'s profits for 2000 are not known in detail. "All I am prepared to say is that we have registered record profits," says Olsson. The Volvo Car Corp. sold just over 422,000 cars in 2000, 11,000 more than in 1999. The United States beat sales records for the second year in a row with 123,900 cars sold in 2000, compared with 120,700 in 1999.

"Our target in the longer term is still 600,000 cars a year, but it is not realistic to set an exact date on a total market that is currently on a downward spiral. Our main goal is to continue to increase, even when the market as a whole is in decline," says Olsson.

VOLVO

Exemplary integration

At the start of 2001, Volvo Cars can look back on two years as a subsidiary of Ford Motor. Here, too, Olsson is very upbeat: "Ford's acquisition of the Volvo Car Corp. is one of the best examples of successful integration in the automotive industry. So far, our cooperation has focused largely on establishing synergies and to date about 20 coordination projects have succeeded in contributing to improved economies at both Volvo Cars and Ford. Two excellent examples are the purchase of advertising space and brand-neutral components.

"We have also taken vital strategic decisions to have two main factories in the future, one in Torslanda (Sweden) and one in Ghent (Belgium). Production of the successor to the present-day S40/V40 will be moved here. This car family is being developed on a platform shared jointly by Volvo Cars, Ford and Mazda. From the outset it will have a greater width than the present-day S40/V40, which is built on a platform shared with Mitsubishi (at Born in the Netherlands)."

Intensified Internet focus

Volvo Cars' change-enhancement project, "ReVolvolution," whose keywords are faster, better and smarter, features an intensified focus on the Internet, among other goals. "The focus on e-trade promotes a partially new infrastructure within our organization. To date, we have produced a model that makes it possible for the customer to search for useful information and locate the right car at the best price.

"The next logical step is to give customers the possibility of actually concluding the purchase deal on the Internet. Before we take that step, however, we want to be sure that our customers actually want this kind of solution and we want to verify the type of demands they will impose on its functions," explains Olsson.

Volvo Cars is launching a new Internet site to coincide with the Geneva Motor Show. Its website www.conceptlabvolvo.com will allow customers to ask questions and put forward their views online to key people behind today's Volvo cars and the models of the future.

"The battle for car purchasers will be won by the companies that have the best customer relations. We're talking about a focus on quality that simply has to have the highest priority. Our Concept Lab will serve as one of our "cars" out on the market, keenly attuned to customer needs and emerging trends. The viewpoints it channels to us will give us even better potential for developing cars with the appearance and properties that today's and tomorrow's car buyers actually want," concludes Olsson.

AUDIOVOX SHOWROOM NOW OPEN
Leading state-of-the-art car video products supplier Audiovox recently opened its main showroom at the Shangri-La Plaza Mall where shoppers can see firsthand the company's latest products within this virtual mobile theater. You can turn your vehicle into a mobile cinema with top-of-the-line entertainment system only Audiovox can offer. For inquiries call 687-2413 and 724-9699.

Accord most stable in rollover study

THE HONDA Accord has become the first vehicle to receive a five-star rating in a rollover resistance study by the US Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA).

The study examined 2001 model-year cars for resistance to rolling over in a single vehicle accident.

The vehicles were given a rating between one star and five stars, with five stars representing a rollover risk of less than 10 percent. Vehicles rated with one star had a rollover risk greater than 40 percent.

All other passenger cars, including the Honda Civic sedan, received a four-star rating. The Odyssey was one of two people movers to receive four stars.

The rankings are based on static stability—a measure of the vehicle's center of gravity and track width—and are designed to help consumers make more informed purchasing decisions.

Nissan Sentra Exalta offers superior sedan value

SINCE its introduction in the market in March last year, the Nissan Sentra Exalta has offered superior sedan value to the Filipino consumer.

Year-end figures from the Chamber of Automotive Manufacturers of the Philippines Inc. (Campi) reveal that the Sentra sold 2,547 units for year 2000 posting a 285-percent growth rate over 1999 total sales figures. This makes the Exalta the biggest sedan gainer among the major players in the local auto market.

Significantly, volume sales for the Sentra Exalta showed an apparent shift in preference from the low-end Sentra 1.3 FE (49 percent) in 1999 to the top-of-the-line Sentra Exalta 1.6 STA/SLA (61 percent) models in 2000.

Distinguished for its unique features that place it in a class all its own, the Nissan Sentra Exalta was designed to enhance the lifestyle of its owner while making full use of its heritage inherited from other locally available Nissan sedans—the Nissan Cefiro and the Nissan Verita.

Ingenious

Nissan capitalized on ingenuity in effecting the concept of product differentiation for the Exalta. The hands-free audiophone system and the two-way power sunroof are comfort and convenience features that present visible breakthroughs. The full auto climate control air-conditioning system, originally available in higher-class sedans, was integrated into its cabin. The Exalta's 2DIN audio system reinvents conventional sedan setups, as it comes with a 12-disc CD changer and a 6-speaker system.

The rear back-up sensor is another "fresh" safety feature, sounding off the driver of rear obstacles when backing up.

All these new features are packed inside the Exalta's revitalized exterior design that emphasizes dynamic and streamlined styling. Its crystal dual bulb headlamps complemented by its horizontal grille design add to the classy look of the car.

Inside one finds the luxurious two-tone beige interior that sets out an opulent and cozy ambiance. Its overall classy interior is enhanced by high-grade plush leather seats and door trim upholstery. Elmwood finishes are layed out on the 4-spoke leather-wrapped steering wheel, center console cluster and side-door trims. The bluish glow of the sapphire starlight instrument panel adds to the pleasurable drive at night.

As part of Nissan's commitment of providing enhanced safety and security, the Exalta has the most advanced equipment that includes driverside SRS airbag that complements the ELR seatbelts for greater driver protection. This prevents fatal head injuries during frontal collisions since the airbag deploys instantaneously upon impact.

The antilock brake system (ABS) corresponds to every driving demand particularly during wheel lock-up in the event of sudden braking. With ABS, the system regulates the brake fluid pressure preventing this. As a result, the driver is able to retain the steering control even in slippery and emergency situations.

For maximum stopping power, the Exalta is also equipped with a 4-wheel disc brake system that allows the driver to brake with optimum reliability and precision.

Nissan's zone body concept ensures that the Exalta's monocoque body structure can surpass the most severe collisions by actually absorbing the impact energy while protecting the entire cabin in the event of head-on, off-set and side collisions or even during rollovers.

The automatic shift lock (ASL) provides added protection by preventing unnecessary movements when the car is parked.

No to another Citra hijack

(From page B5)

cash toll gates. What Caltrans did was open combination tollgates that accepted both Fast Track and toll-paying vehicles. Now, this Bay Area reader says, more motorists use the Fast Track.

Meanwhile, readers who oppose Citra's proposed 300-percent toll rate increase are encouraged to write to Mr. Mariano Benedicto II, executive director/hearing officer of the Toll Regulatory Board/Office of the President at 2/F, Integrated Bar of the Philippines (IBP) Bldg., Julia Vargas Ave., Ortigas Center, Pasig City. A toll rate hike will surely set off a wave of price increases of basic commodities, so sound off.

* * *

TODAY'S BUMPER STICKER: It's not hard to meet expenses, they're everywhere.

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KIA RIO HATCHBACK

Only the price is cheap

**TEXT AND PHOTO
BY VERNON B. SARNE**

UNLESS you're talking of kimchi, Korean products have not exactly enjoyed a lily-white reputation in the Philippines, especially in the field of motor vehicles. Through the years, cars made by Hyundai, Kia and Daewoo have played lowly second fiddle to their Nippon counterparts. Alternative modes of transport that are cheap and, well, **cheap.**

Kia, for instance, despite bringing in a fairly decent sport-utility (Sportage) and van (Pregio), is finding it difficult to completely obliterate the stigma of the humble Pride subcompact. Last year, Columbian Motors Corp., distributor of Kia vehicles here, launched another campaign to prop up the Korean carmaker's reputation as a legitimate and competent car assembler. The campaign came in the form of two vehicles—the Carnival minivan and the Rio—which is available in sedan and hatchback versions. One look at the new Kias and cheap is the last word that will come to mind. "Interesting" is the new adjective.

CMC marketing communications man Carlo Nakpil wasted no time in taunting the motoring journalists with test drives, as if to tell the world that Kia was no longer willing to be the doormat of the industry. We were the recipient of one demo unit, an automatic Rio hatchback powered by a 1.5-liter twincam motor that manages a 108-hp maximum output.

So how is this new Kia that dares tease us with a fresh styling that evokes both sportiness and practicality? Okay, let's not mince words here. Although the Rio is nowhere near your favorite Japanese sedan in terms of ride quality and engine smoothness, it is a decent car. A car anyone can put to good use around the city. The Rio represents huge Kia improvements in the areas of performance and roadworthiness. Fit and finish, too, are quite acceptable. We bet you're not expecting an armrest in this car. But it has one. And then some. Like a driver-side airbag, rear wiper and washer, and a third brake light.

The Rio hatchback is not actually rendered in your traditional hatchback layout. With a roof that subtly slopes all the way back to form the tailgate, this Rio looks more like a station wagon. But hatchback or wagon, this car—with its compactness (all of 4.22 meters in length) and modern design cues (sharp edges for the headlamps and taillights)—is bound to endear itself more to women, particularly the automatic. The ease with which the tailgate opens and closes, for one, will go a long way in wooing lady drivers who need that extra luggage space for shopping.

The Rio hatchback, which we think is better looking than its sedan sibling, is a departure from the old wagon styles we've grown accustomed to. It sheds boxy corners in favor of round edges and sharp contours. If only for the looks, the Rio instantly gets our nod. Add to this a respectable fit and finish, even surpassing the quality found in some Japanese entry-level cars, and you have a satisfactory mover that sells far cheaper (P579,000 for the automatic; P539,000 for the manual) than the more fancied Toyotas and Hondas.

Performance, of course, is another matter. Let's just say the Rio will constantly remind you it's still Korean, not Japanese. The drivetrain, in particular, could use some refinement. But it's really not bad at all. Again, so long as you keep the Rio within the confines of the paved city, you will find it can serve you well and faithfully.

If you're in the market for a compact wagon, you might want to give the Rio hatchback a serious look, especially since the Suzuki Esteem is no more and the Opel Astra wagon is much more pricey. It comes with a 2-year/50,000-kilometer warranty.

The Kia Rio is also available in a 1.3-liter bare sedan version for all of P439,000.

KIA Rio Hatchback

FAST FACTS

Kia Rio Hatchback

Type:	Front-wheel drive 5-door hatchback
Engine:	1.5-liter DOHC in-line-4
Maximum power:	108 hp @ 6,000 rpm
Maximum torque:	14.3 kg-m @ 4,500 rpm
Transmissions:	5-speed manual; 4-speed automatic
Dimensions	(L x W x H): 4.22 m x 1.68 m x 1.44 m
Wheelbase:	2.41 m
Front suspension:	MacPherson struts with coil springs
Rear suspension:	Torsion beam axle with conical springs
Brakes:	Ventilated discs in front; drums in rear
Safety:	Driver-side airbag
Wheels	13-inch alloys
Seating capacity:	5
Prices:	P539,000 (manual); P579,000 (automatic)

How your brakes work

BRAKE fluids are scientifically compounded and chemically balanced to boost the power of your car's braking system. An average car owner may not be aware of it, but the system behind the brakes goes way beyond the brake pedal. The system is an amazing interplay of force, friction, motion, heat and hydraulics.

Two popular brake system types are the drum brake and disc brake. In the drum brake system, these are basically two features: parts that rotate and parts that don't. These parts work together to make the brakes work every time a driver steps on the pedal.

Parts

Among the parts that don't rotate, the steel brake shoes, wheel cylinder and the pistons are very important. They are found on the actual drum brake assembly, which is so-called because it is shaped like a drum.

The rotating parts of the system meanwhile are the wheel hub, spindle, brake drum and brake shoes. The tires are fitted over the wheel hub. Attached inside the wheel hub is the brake drum assembly, a smaller circular contraption than the hub. The wheel, hub and drum rotate as one unit every time the car moves.

Types

Whenever you step on the brake pedal, hydraulic force activates the wheel cylinder found in the brake assembly. The cylinder makes two pistons in its side to move outward when you step on the pedal. The mechanism works to stop or slow down the rotating wheel when the pistons force the brake shoes to move outward toward the brake drum. This movement puts pressure on the inner side of the brake drum, stopping the hub, the wheel and thus the vehicle.

Another type of brake is the disc brake, which also has the steering knuckle spindle. A caliper is attached to this spindle. The caliper performs a "clamping action" with the two steel brake shoes. The disc brake also has a wheel hub, which fits over and rotates around the spindle. A steel disc, instead of a brake drum, is attached to the hub. The wheel is bolted to the hub and the hub, disc and wheel rotate as one unit.

When you step on the brake pedal, hydraulic force activates one or more pistons in the caliper, the brake pads move together and clamp on the disc, thus slowing or stopping the rotating wheel.

Many cars use disc brakes in front because this type rids heat more quickly than drum brakes. Drum brakes are meanwhile more often used in the rear, since greater force is required to stop the front wheels.

Brake fluid

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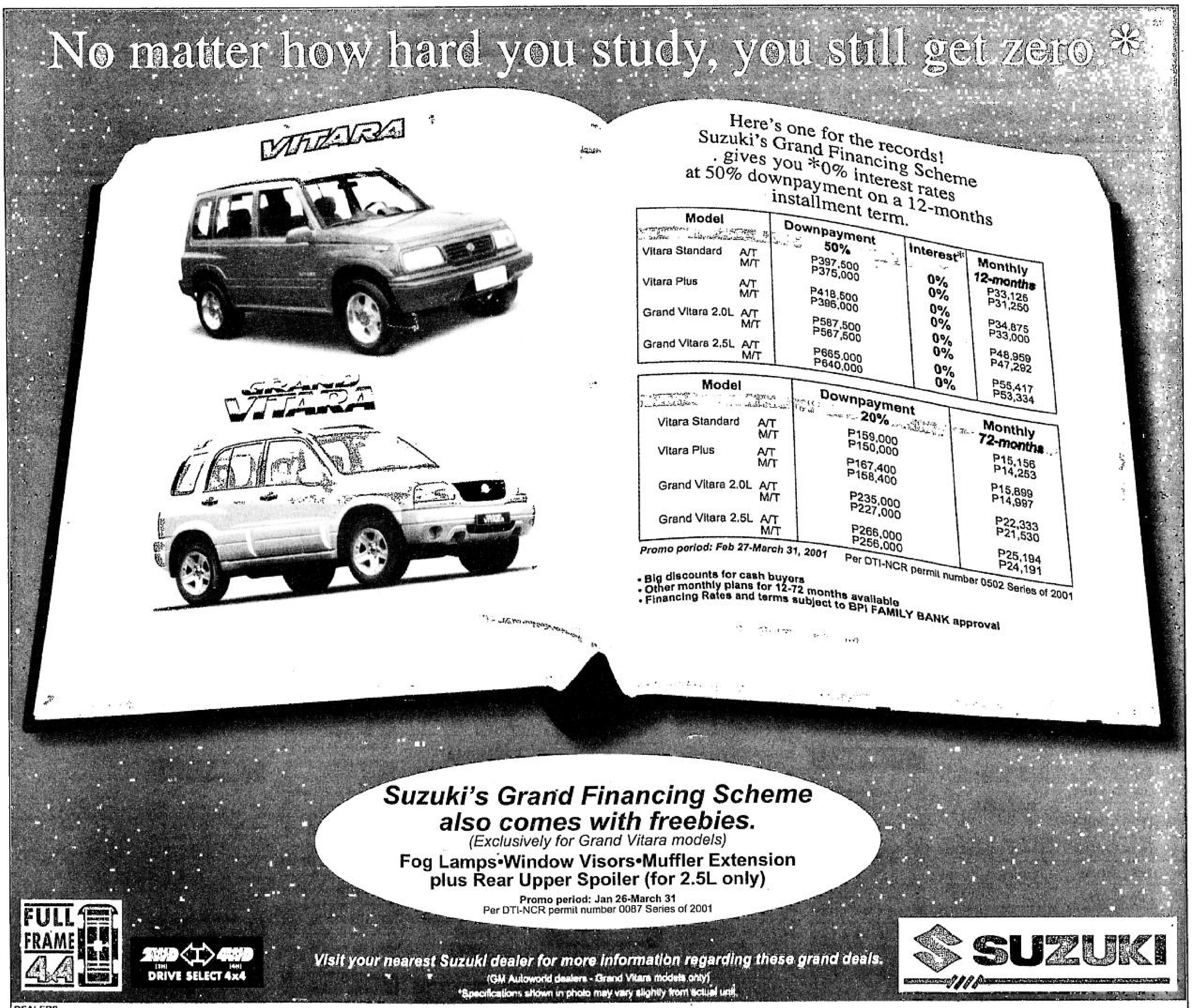

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Grand Vitara 2.5L	A/T	P665,000	0%	P55,417
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INVITATION TO BID
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Supply & Delivery of Various Computers & Paraphernalia

The Government of the Philippines has obtained a loan from the Work Bank for the prosecution of the Water Resources Development Project. Part of the loan shall be used to finance eligible payments including the procurement of Various Computers and Paraphernalia.

The National Irrigation Administration (NIA) now as implementing Agency of the Project invites sealed bids from eligible bidders for the supply and delivery of the following:

Qty.	Unit	Description
81	Units	Desktop Computer, Intel Pentium III, 800 Mhz
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Interested bidders may obtain bid documents starting **26 February 2001** to **15 March 2001** upon payment of a non-refundable amount of One Thousand Pesos (P1,000) at the Procurement Division, Ground Floor, NIA Bldg., Diliman, Quezon City, Tel. Nos. **921-3906** and **922-4768.**

Bids shall be publicly opened on **05 April 2001**, 2:00 p.m. at the Conference Room of the Asst. Administrator for Administrative Services, Ground Floor, NIA Bldg., Quezon City.

All bids must accompanied by a Bid Security of at least 2.5% of the total bid price.

The NIA reserves the right to reject any or all bids, declare the bidding a failure or waive any or all informalities or to award such bids to any bidder whose bid is considered most advantageous to the Government.

(Sgd.) **ISIDRO R. DIGAL**
Chairman

(PDI - Feb 23 & Mar 1 2001)

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LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the estate of **MARIA BERNARDINO** was extrajudicially settled by her heirs per Doc. No. 83; Page No. 17; Book No. I; Series of 1998 of Not. Pub. Arlene Carbon of Taytay, Rizal (PDI-Mar. 1, 8, & 15, 2001)

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION

LICENSE FOR LOCAL PRIVATE EMPLOYMENT AGENCY

PRIVATE EMPLOYMENT AGENCY
OPERATOR'S LICENSE NO. M-00-00-117 New

By authority vested in me by the Labor Code and the Omnibus Rules Implementing the Code, and payment of the license fee in the amount of FIVE THOUSAND PESOS (P5,000.00) ONLY having been made as per Official Receipt Number 4078324 P dated 03 July 2000 and posting of the appropriate cash and surety bonds of P25,000.00 and P100,000.00 respectively, having been complied with, this LICENSE is hereby granted to Ms. Teolfa R. Begonia to establish, direct and/or manage the

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This license which expires on 12 June 2002 is valid only in Philippines Transfer or use by any other person or entity tenders this license null and void.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Official Seal of the Regional Office no. NCR Department of Labor and Employment, to be affixed at the City of Manila Philippines, this 13th day of June 2000.

(Sgd.) MAXIMO B. LIM
Regional Director

(PDI - March 1, 2001)

PUBLIC NOTICES

LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late **Col. Felix L. Cabreros P.A.** has been extrajudicially settled among his heirs as per Doc.# 64, Page# 14, Book# 01, Series of 2001 Before Notary Public Policarpio R. Zacarias of Makati City.
(Feb. 15, 22, & Mar. 1, 2001)

NOTICE OF LOSS

Notice is given that Stock Cert. of Dangerous Drug S2#2712618 under the name of **Dr. Imelda David** date of issue 1997, 1999 was lost.
(PDI-March 1, 2001)

Notice is hereby given that **Stock Cert. #5933 of Centro Escolar Univ.** issued in the name of Mamerta B. Felizardo have been reported lost.
PDI-March 1, 8 & 15, 2001

PERSONAL

NOVENA PRAYER

O Immaculate Virgin Mary, Mother of our Lord Jesus and our Mother, penetrated with the most likely confidence, in thy all-powerful and never failing intercession, mani-fested so often through the Miraculous Medal, with thy loving trustful children. Implore thee to obtain for us, the grace and favors we ask during the Novena, if they be beneficial to our immortal souls, and the souls for whom we pray. Thou knowest, O Mary, how our souls have been the sanctuaries of thy Son who hits inequity. Obtain for us then a deep hatred of sin and that purity of heart which will attach us to God alone so that our every thought, word and deed may tend to His greater glory. Obtain also for us a spirit of prayer and self-denial that we may recover by penance what we lost by sin and at length attain to that blessed abode where thou art the Queen of angels and of men. Amen.

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"I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me will live, even though he dies; and whoever believes in Me will never die."
John 11:25-26

ATTY. CASIMIRO "MERONG" GONZALES CALUAG

of Guiguinto, Bulacan and Pasay City

Peacefully joined his Creator and his beloved wife ***Alicia Mirasol-Caluag*** *on Monday, February 26, 2001 at the age of 92.*

His children **Mila** and **Lito Deocampo**, **Maribel** and **Eugene Uygongco**, **Danilo "Chino"** and **Eloy Vargas**; grandchildren **Jay-Jay Deocampo**, **Gian** and **Jaime Caluag**; brothers and sister **Amando** (†), **Bonifacio** (†), **Consolacion** (†) and **Restituto** (†); nephews, nieces and other relatives request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the Our Lady of Sorrows Church along F.B. Harrison Street, Pasay City.

Interment will be on Saturday, March 3, 2001 at the Manila Memorial Park, Parañaque after the 8:00 a.m. Mass at the Our Lady of Sorrows Church, Pasay City.

SOCORRO URBANO COBANGBANG
"Tita Coty"

of Daet, Camarines Norte

Born on December 24, 1927, and passed away in the Grace of our Lord on February 27, 2001 at the age of 73.

The bereaved family **Tony** and **Rosie**, **Monching** (†) and **Lita**, **Ben** and **Mely**, nephews, nieces and grandchildren, other relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at San Juan Bautista Parish Church, Daet, Camarines Norte.

Interment will be on March 2, 2001 at Daet Catholic Cemetery after the 10:00 a.m. Mass at San Juan Bautista Parish Church.

Message of Thanks

We, the family and relatives of the late

MERCEDES CALANGI CASTILLO

of Talaga East, Mabini, Batangas
"CHFD"

who joined her Creator on February 11, 2001

Sincerely convey our deepest gratitude and appreciation to all those who offered Masses and prayers, sent flowers, visited and kept vigil, attended the funeral rites and condoled with us in our moment of grief.

"Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."
Matt. 11:28

Our Dearly Beloved

HERMINIANO MAGDANGAL LAUCHENGCO

of Magalang, Pampanga and Malabon, Metro Manila

Has peacefully joined his Creator on February 24, 2001 at the age of 81.

His bereaved wife **Clara Lazaro**; children and in-laws **Rey** and children; **Rosita** and **Nep Pinza**; **Mercy** (†) and **Eddie Alonzo**; **Boy** and **Evelyn del Rosario**; **Eddie** and **Cecile Rosales**; **August** and **Geli Coquia**; **Evelyn** and **Gemo Jimenez**; **Celle** and **Noli Catindig**; brothers, sisters, brothers-in-law, sisters-in-law, grandchildren, grandchildren-in-law, great grandchildren, nieces and nephews, relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the repose of his soul.

His body lies in state at Floresco Funeral Homes, Gen. Luna St., Malabon, Metro Manila.

Interment will be on Sunday, March 4, 2001 after the 1:00 p.m. Mass.

We deeply mourn the passing away of

Our dearly beloved brother

PHILIP T. DUYONGCO

September 13, 1936 - February 2, 2001

Who peacefully joined His Creator on February 2, 2001 in Houston, Texas, at the age of 64.

His bereaved wife, Lulu; children Michelle, Tanya and Marjorie; brothers and sisters-in-law; Robert and Teresita, Jorge, Artemio and Brenda; sister Cristina; sister-in-law Perla; nephews and nieces, and other relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

A memorial service will be held on March 2, 2001 at 6:00 PM at Christ the King Parish Church (Parish Hall), Greenmeadows Avenue, Quezon City.

"Only when you drink from the river of
Silence shall you indeed sing.
And when you have reached the mountain top,
Then you shall begin to climb.
And when the earth shall claim your
Limbs, then shall you truly dance."
— Kahlil Gibran

Dorotea Soto Coronel

of Bacolor, Pampanga and Quezon City

Born January 23, 1928
Died February 27, 2001

Her children **Sheila**, **Miriam** and **Anthony Ferrer**, **Mario Antonio** and **Joyce**, **John Joseph**, **Marco** and **Pinky**, and **Gilbert** and **Anna Karina**;

Her brothers **Modesto** and **Ricardo** and her sisters **Thelma**, **Amelia** and **Carolina**;

And her grandchildren pray for the repose of her soul and that of her departed husband, **Antonio P. Coronel**.

Her remains are at the Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church in New Manila, Quezon City. She will be interred at the Lubao Memorial Park in Pampanga on March 3, 2001, after the 3 p.m. mass at the Lubao church.

A memorial service will be held at 6 p.m. on March 2 at the Mount Carmel Hall.

"Eternal life will swallow up that which can die. God made us for this very reason and He has given us the Spirit as a guarantee that we will live again."
2 Cor. 5:4-5

The family, relatives and friends of

LUZ ALCANTARA TIBAY

of Pililla, Rizal

Profoundly mourn the demise of the Tibay matriarch on February 23, 2001 at the age of 85.

We, husband **Memong**; sons **Willie**, **Sonny** and **Dante**; daughters-in-law **Sonia Pantaleon**, **May Medinaceli** and **Leonie Talavera**; grandchildren **Victor Cedric**, **Gene Paolo**, **Michelle Fatima**, **Mickey**, **Lemboy**, **Sarah**, **Pia** and **John Daleo**; sisters **Puring**, **Menang** and **Rosa** and other relatives humbly request the pious readers to pray for her eternal repose. Her remains lie in state at her residence.

Interment will be on Saturday, March 03, 2001 at 2:00 p.m. at the Pililla Cemetery.

WE DESIGN OBITUARIES FOR FREE

EX-MAYOR NORBERTO G. BLANCO

Bacolor, Pampanga

Past President "Senior Citizens" Pampanga Chapter
Joined his Creator on February 27, 2001 at the age of 76.

Tatang Berting, as he was fondly called is survived by his wife **Angelina**, and his children **Erlinda** and **Conrad**, **Boy** and **Karen**, **Efren** and **Marivel**, **Rico** and **Didith**, **Lita** and **Othelo** (†), **Aileen** and **Bot**, **Beng** and **Jimi**, **Angie**, **Iman**, **Beth** and **Benner**, **Edgar** and **Joan**, **Blanca** (†), **Ferdie**, **Dorisa**, **Eric**, **Erwin**, **Lucky** and brother **Atty. Guillermo Blanco**; sister **Gregoria B. Alejandrino**; nephews, nieces, grandchildren and other relatives.

His remains lie in state at his residence in Proj. 157, lot 20 of the Bulaon Resettlement Center, San Fernando, Pampanga.

Interment will be on Sunday, March 4, 2001 at Gray Line Memorial Garden, Bulaon, San Fernando, Pampanga at 2:00 p.m.

Gloomy US economic data bolster interest rate cut talk

NEW YORK—Slumping consumer confidence and a sharp drop in housing sales fanned market expectations on Tuesday that the Federal Reserve would act promptly to cut interest rates and shore up a sagging US economy.

But Fed Vice Chair Roger Ferguson, a day before the central bank chief discusses the economy before Congress, said while recent economic data showed a significant ramping down in US growth, the depth and breadth of that slowdown still remained uncertain.

Unraveling consumer confidence, which the Conference Board said tumbled to a 4-1/2-year-low in February to 106.8, down from 115.7 the prior month, as job prospects became bleak, posed a risk of unacceptably slow growth, Ferguson said.

Adding to the shaky growth picture were US government reports showing a 10.9-percent plunge in new home sales in January and a 6.0-percent slide in new orders for big-ticket durable goods slid 6.0 percent.

But there were mixed signals in the reports. Excluding volatile transportation and defense orders, durable goods orders were unchanged and the slump in housing sales came off extraordinarily high levels in December. Moreover, consumers were less gloomy about current conditions than they were about the six-month outlook.

"In the current environment, monetary policy faces the short-term challenge of discerning the uncertain dimensions of the current slowdown in economic growth and responding appropriately," Ferguson told the Securities Industry Association in New York.

Ferguson's comments left murky whether a Fed rate cut to prod growth back to life was imminent. The market was chafing for a quick half percentage point cut in the Fed's overnight inter-bank lending rates, currently at 5.5 percent, and dealers fixated Tuesday on the latest signs that a severe economic downturn may be taking hold as evidence that a cut was needed.

The Nasdaq composite index shed 4.36 percent to 2,207.76 though the Dow Jones industrial average fared better, ending down a scant 0.09 percent to 10,633.77.

"Contractionary forces are still building in the economy, and it will be up to the Fed to soothe markets," said Dana Johnson, chief economist at Banc One Financial Markets in Chicago. *Reuters*

China sees 7% to 8% GDP growth in 2001

BEIJING—China's economic growth this year should come in at between 7 and 8 percent as the government looked to maintain economic growth by raising incomes and stimulating consumption, officials said yesterday.

"In the coming new year, we will continue to carry out a proactive fiscal policy and a robust monetary policy, widely enhancing fiscal supports," Zhu Zhixin, commissioner of the National Statistics Bureau, said.

"As far as I know, growth will not be lower than the previous year," he said.

China's economy grew by 8.2 percent in the first three quarters of 2000 but slumped to 7.3 percent in the fourth quarter for a rise over the full year of 8 percent.

"The main reason the GDP growth in the fourth quarter of 2000 was lower than 8.2 percent, or roughly around 7 percent, was because the base figure in 1999 was high," Zhu said.

To maintain a high growth rate this year, the government would continue to stimulate the economy through fiscal measures while placing a priority on raising personal incomes and boosting consumption, he said.

"The bureau's growth target for 2001 will be between 7 and 8 percent," NSB vice commissioner Ye Zhen said.

Diplomatic sources in Beijing said Premier Zhu Rongji in his work report to the National People's Congress next week would call for an economic growth rate for 2001 to be "around 7 percent." *AFP*

Recession risk rises in Japan

TOKYO—Japan's industrial production fell a shocking 3.9 percent in January, the government said yesterday, providing more stark evidence of a sharp economic slowdown spilling over from the United States and Asia.

"It's a very bleak number. It's the first real sign we've got that the Japanese economy is slowing down very substantially," said Garry Evans, a strategist with HSBC Securities.

"The risk of Japan going back into outright recession is a very real risk."

Economists polled by Reuters had expected on average a rise of 0.1 percent compared with December, adjusted for seasonal variations. Even the most pessimistic forecast was for a drop of 0.8 percent.

Just as troubling was a 0.6-percent increase in inventories, following a 0.1-percent drop in December, suggesting that manufacturers would have to cut output further to work off stockpiles of unsold goods.

An official at the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry said the slide was mainly due to sagging exports, one of the mainstays of an economy that has struggled for a decade to snap out of a stop-go cycle of modest growth followed by recession.

"The impact of the slowdown in exports is substantial. Exports of cars to North America fell, and the impact of falling production was also seen in a slowdown in exports of electronics goods," the official told reporters.

METI downgraded its assessment of the underlying production trend, which it now said was moving sideways. It forecast a rebound in output of 2.7 percent in February before a renewed decline of 1.4 percent in March. *Reuters*

Microsoft breakup seen unlikely

WASHINGTON—A breakup of software giant Microsoft Corp., as ordered by a federal judge last June, appeared less likely to take place after two days of hearings here before a seven-judge appeals panel.

"The judges were very skeptical that the breakup would be useful to the economy and to consumers," said Washington lawyer Lars Liebeler, counsel for the Computing Technology Industry Association.

In seven hours of oral argument, the court frequently called into question the rulings of US District Court Judge Thomas Penfield Jackson, who last April upheld government charges that Microsoft had violated antitrust law and had sought to squelch competition in the software market.

In June, Jackson again adopted US Justice Department recommendations in ordering the company to be split into two entities, one to develop the Windows operating platform and another specializing in software applications.

George Washington University law professor William Kovacic predicted the appeals panel would send the case back to federal district court for further consideration of the "remedy" imposed by Jackson.

But he added it was near certain Jackson would be replaced and "will not appear in this drama again."

Chief Appeals Court Judge Harry Edwards, citing the absence of a precise definition of the browser market in Jackson's rulings, at one point commented, "These findings are absolutely unclear."

Added Judge David Sentelle: "If there isn't a proper finding, then we would have to at least send this back for some trial judge to weigh the facts."

Government lawyers argued Microsoft illegally tried to extend its monopoly position in the market for operating systems to other software sectors, notably by integrating—or "tying"—its Explorer browser into its market-dominant Windows platform. *AFP*

Global trade protesters, police clash

CANCUN, Mexico—Dozens of people were injured Tuesday as police clashed with globalization foes and assaulted reporters covering protests at the end of a two-day meeting of the World Economic Forum in this popular resort.

The clashes took place as Mexican President Vicente Fox closed the international gathering of bankers and industrialists with a call for a "democratization of markets" so that globalization should benefit everyone, not just a chosen few.

Police violently beat protesters and reporters in two separate incidents.

Several people were covered in blood and police were seen kicking protesters who had fallen to the ground.

Red Cross officials reported eight people were injured in the clashes while organizers put the number at 30.

Several of the protesters had dropped their pants before they tried to force their way through a police barrage set up to prevent demonstrators from heading toward the luxury hotel hosting the meeting.

Thirty others were arrested after taking their clothes off on a beach in front of the hotel, where police used batons to beat reporters, several of whom sustained cuts and bruises. *AFP*

China unlikely to join trade body next month

HONG KONG—China's entry into the World Trade Organization was being held up mainly by disagreements over agriculture subsidies, according to a WTO official who said yesterday that China would not join within the next month.

"It should be the end run, but it does need time," said Patrick Low, a director in the director general's office of the WTO. "I can say it's not going to be next month. But it's certainly in the short run."

Some top trade officials recently said China could complete its membership process by March, but the Chinese trade minister, Shi Guangsheng, was quoted this week by mainland media as saying it might not happen until October or November.

Low, in comments to a group of business leaders, said Shi's prediction was "informed."

"Who better than he would know?" Low asked.

China has balked at Washington's insistence that it make more concessions on the subsidies it can give to farmers—although European Union officials say China's approach seems reasonable.

Low said in addition to agriculture, there were a number of less-sticky technical issues that still must be resolved before China could join. *AP*

Nike seen missing targets

BEAVERTON, Oregon—Shares of Nike Inc. fell 19.5 percent after the world's largest athletics shoe and clothing maker said its third-quarter results would fall well short of Wall Street's expectations,

The Beaverton-based company said Tuesday it expected to earn between 34 cents and 38 cents per share for the three months ended Feb. 28, blaming lower-than-expected US footwear sales and glitches in a computer inventory system.

Analysts surveyed by First Call/Thomson Financial were expecting 53 cents per share.

Shares of Nike fell $9.57 to close at $39.60 Tuesday on the New York Stock Exchange.

"This is not a particularly fine hour for me," Nike chair Phil Knight said during a conference call with investors following the earnings announcement.

But Knight said the rest of the market for Nike products was mostly healthy, and the company should meet fourth-quarter expectations of 60 to 65 cents per share. *AP*

HSBC earnings up 22%

HSBC Holdings Plc. made a profit before tax of $9.775 billion in 2000, an increase of 22 percent over 1999. Profit attributable to shareholders was $6.628 billion, an increase of 23 percent.

On a cash basis, profit before tax increased 28 percent to $10.3 billion and attributable profit increased 31 percent to $7.153 billion.

Net interest income of $13.723 billion was 14 percent, or $1.733 billion, higher than 1999. Other operating income rose by 20 percent to $10.85 billion within which net fees and commissions rose 22 percent to $7.311 billion.

The group's cost: income ratio, excluding the impact of amortization of goodwill, was 55.3 percent compared with 53.9 percent in 1999. This was after incurring $121 million of costs relating to the restructuring of recent acquisitions.

The charge for bad and doubtful debts was $932 million, which was $1.141 billion lower than in 1999. This was after releasing 60 percent ($174 million) of the special general provision for Asian risk raised in 1997. In view of the slowdown in the US economy and its possible implications for Asian economies as a whole, the balance of the special general provision has been transferred to augment the general bad debt provision.

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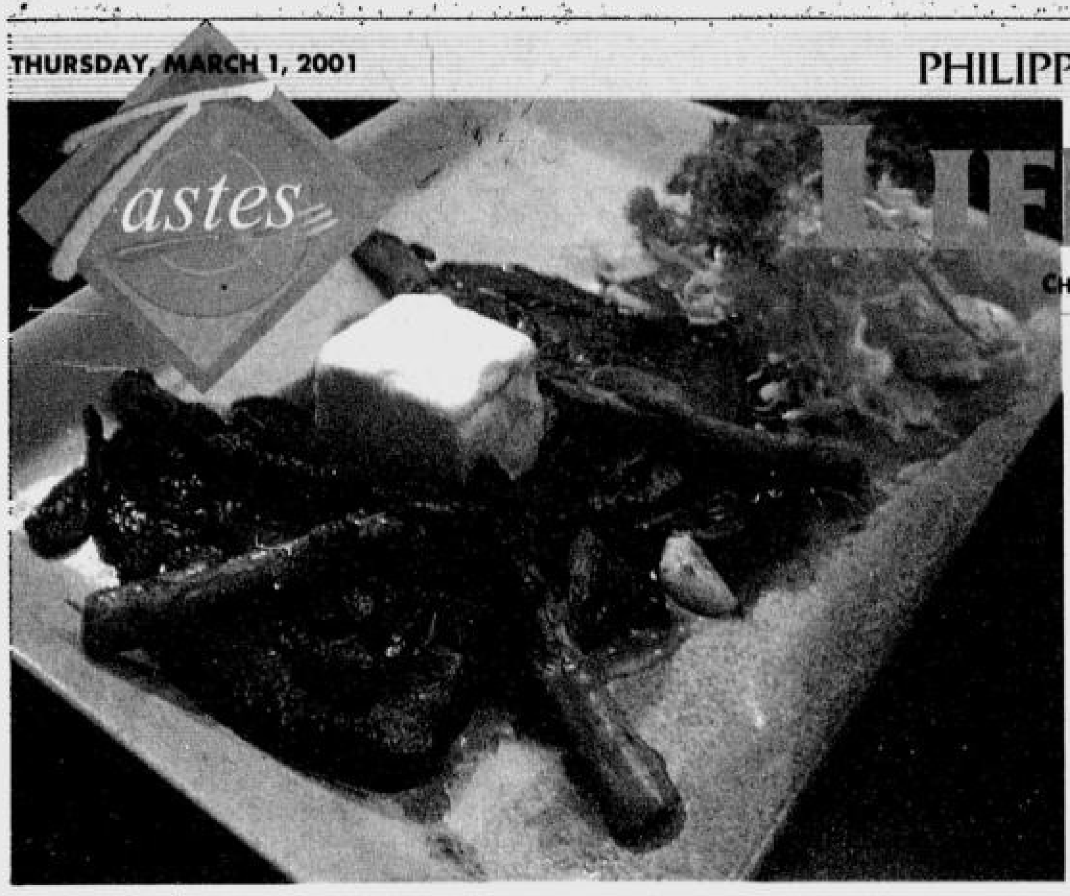
LIFESTYLE
CHELO BANAL-FORMOSO, Editor



NINNIKU Cheese Steak

So lucky at Ebisu

By Rowena C. Burgos
Photos by Dennis Sabangan

> For a taste of Japan in minimalist surroundings and at reasonable cost, this cozy grill-bar can't be beat

LIKE French food? You're better off in Paris. You will undoubtedly find superior Chinese food in Hong Kong, tastier tacos in Tijuana and better biriyanis in Calcutta. But if Japanese food is your passion, try Ebisu Grill.

The minimalist Ebisu—which means "god of luck"—may not look like Japan but all you have to do is close your eyes and take a bite of the deep-fried Ebi Tempura; suddenly, you are there.

One of the best spots to eat in Makati, Ebisu isn't a swanky see-and-be-seen scene. It's a wood-paneled restaurant and bar whose simple menu—the Yakiniku grill specials are to die for—makes diners clamor for tables.

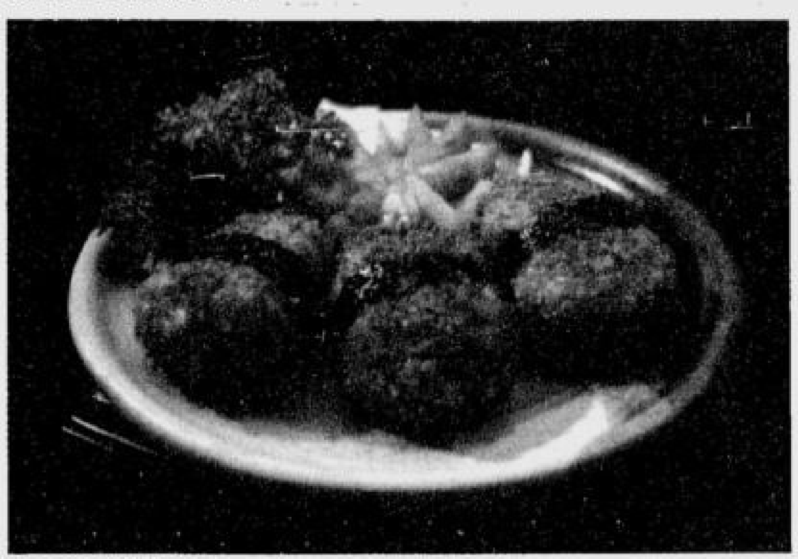
Owners Paolo Abaya and Gretchen Picache opened the restaurant last September. It was Paolo's idea to venture into such business.

"My parents are very much into Japanese food," says Abaya, who grew up in the United States but had the chance to live in Japan for two years. Once in a while, Abaya, general manager of Isuzu Manila, Inc., cooks for his family.

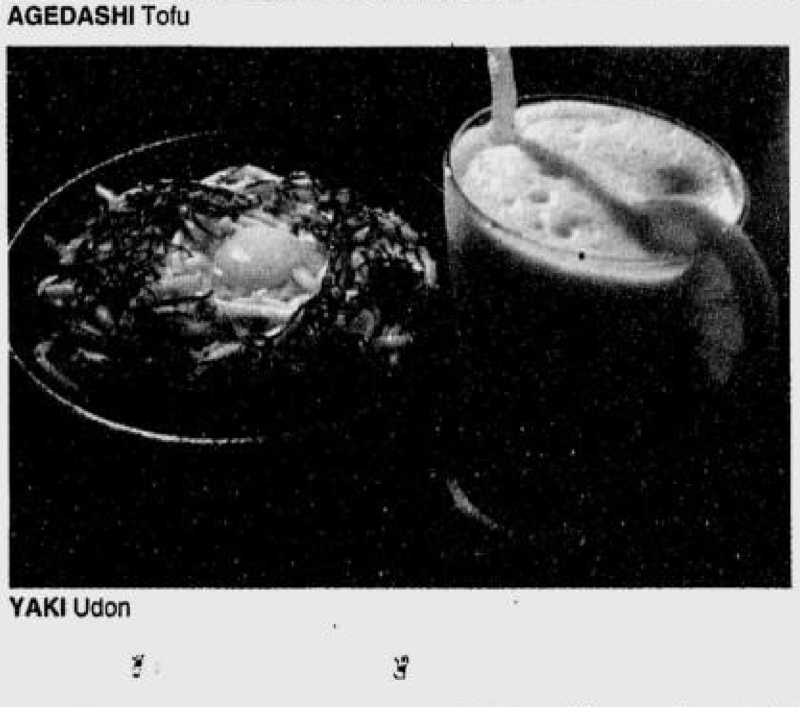
Patterned after a bar in Japan where workers grab a bite before catching a train home and yuppies unwind or meet friends, Ebisu features trendy Japanese fare which are the favorites of Abaya and Picache. "We went to a lot of Japanese restaurants—from the most expensive to the cheapest—so we could come up with an interesting menu," says Picache, whose family owns

SO/ p. C6

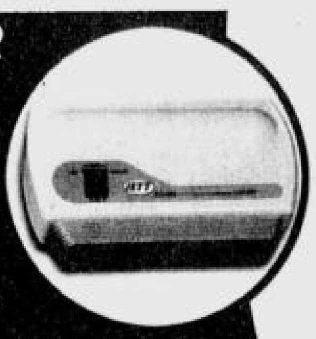
SHAKE No Miso Butter



AGEDASHI Tofu



YAKI Udon



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Waitering & Bartending: Mar. 6, 7, 8, 9 or Mar. 20, 21, 22, 23 (T-F) 5.45-8.45 p.m. Coverage Creative techniques for efficient table setting and attractive arrangement, napkin folding and skirting. Suggested selling techniques; meeting, greeting and seating of guests; Use of magic words; Order taking; Table setting standards (American, Russian and French style); Setting up service station and checkpoint; Serving beverage and entrée; Bartending basics; Cocktail mixing and garnish; Personality Enhancement. P2,500 (incl. of snacks and handouts)

Restaurant Operations: Mar. 14, 15, 16 (Wed-Fri) 5:45-8:45 p.m. Kitchen organization, cycle menu planning, costing, cost control, purchasing, labor, payroll, inventory, etc. Proven techniques on profitable service operations with free snacks. P2,000 (incl. of snacks and handouts).

OTHER CERTIFICATE COURSES w/ hands-on (DAY CLASS):

Cooking II (Comprehensive Cooking): Mar. 6, 7, 8, 9 or Mar. 20, 21, 22, 23 (T-F) 9 a.m. 1 p.m. For Career Cooks. Coverage: menu planning, international standard techniques of preparing stocks, soups, sauces, dressings, salads, main dishes, homemade cold cuts, etc. applicable to 1001 recipes including plate and platter presentation. Free lunch. P2,500.

Basic Baking: Mar. 7, 8, 9 or March 21, 22, 23 (W-F) 1:30- 5 p.m. Hands-on techniques in preparing basic pie crust, different types of cakes, quick bread, yeast breads and more. P2,000.

Cooking I (Basic Cooking). For Messman, Stewards and Beginners. Mar. 13, 14, 15, 16 or March 27, 28, 29, 30 (T-F) 1:30-5 p.m. Basic food preparation, cooking methods for vegetables, pasta, meats and poultry dishes; Techniques of de-boning chicken and fish; Basic garnishing; Table setting and napkin folding; Actual preparation of popular Filipino and Oriental dishes. P2,200.

Basic Cake Decoration: Mar. 17 & 24 (Sat) 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Lecture-workshop on fundamentals in cake decorating; coloring; designing, template, icing preparation (boiled, butter, caramel, chocolate, sugar icing); basic borders, jelly lettering, basic flower making and bunching and motif. Free decorating tips. P2,000.

ONE-DAY SPECIALS (DAY CLASS):

Pasta: Mar. 3 (Sat) 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Lasagna, Chicken Cannelloni; assorted pasta dishes and sauces (Garlic Fettucini, Carbonara, Putanesca, Pesto and Negra). Bonus: homemade pasta making. P600.

Snack meals: Mar. 10 (Sat) 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Empanada, Sausage Pie, Chicken Tarts, Garlic Beef Muffins, Two-Way Burritos. P500.

Baking with Institutional Mixes: Mar. 10 (Sat) 1:30-5 p.m. Rocky Road Brownie, Pineapple Carrot Cake, Choco-Banana Loaf, Chocolate Muffins with Fudge Frosting, Pretzel, Hotdog on Stick, Butterscotch Squares, Chocolate Crinkles. Includes lecture on cost profit analysis. P400.

Kakanin: Mar. 10 (Sat) 1:30-5 p.m. Cuchinta, Cassava Bibingka, Pichi-Pichi, Maja Blanca, Maya Bibingka. Bonus: homemade Salabat. P500.

Catering: Mar. 17 (Sat) 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Portion control, costing, inventory, table layout, equipment sourcing with actual preparation of popular catering dishes such as Morcon, Galantina, Pork Asado, Soy Chicken, Roast Pork, Baked Macaroni, All-Meat Paella, 3 types of fried rice and special desserts. P1,500.

Maya Quick & Easy Gulaman Delights: Mar. 17 (Sat) 3-5 p.m. Cathedral Window, Coffee Jelly, Almond Jelly, Fruity Chewy Salad, 24-Hour, Fresh Crab Salad, and Buko-Pandan. With food styling presentation. P300.

Japanese Cooking: Mar 24 (Sat) 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Miso Soup, Tempura, Sukiyaki; Kamameshi, Assorted Sushi; (Kappamaki, Tekamaki, California Maki) with workshop on Sushi preparation. P750.

Cakeshop Specialties: Mar 24 (Sat) 1:30-5 p.m. Crunch Cake, White Forest Cake, Tiramisu, Crema de Fruta, Cookies and Cream Torte. Bonus: Betty Crocker Cheesecake. P500.

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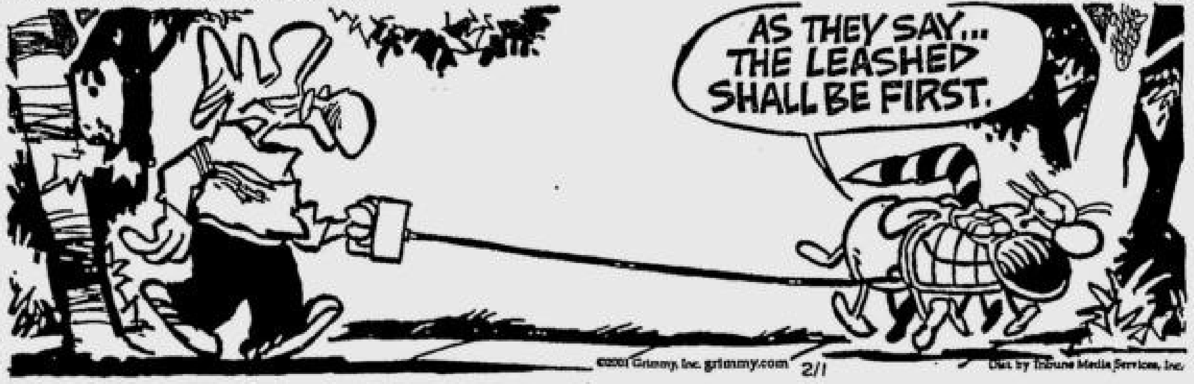
MOTHER GOOSE & GRIMM

BY MIKE PETERS


AS THEY SAY... THE LEASHED SHALL BE FIRST.
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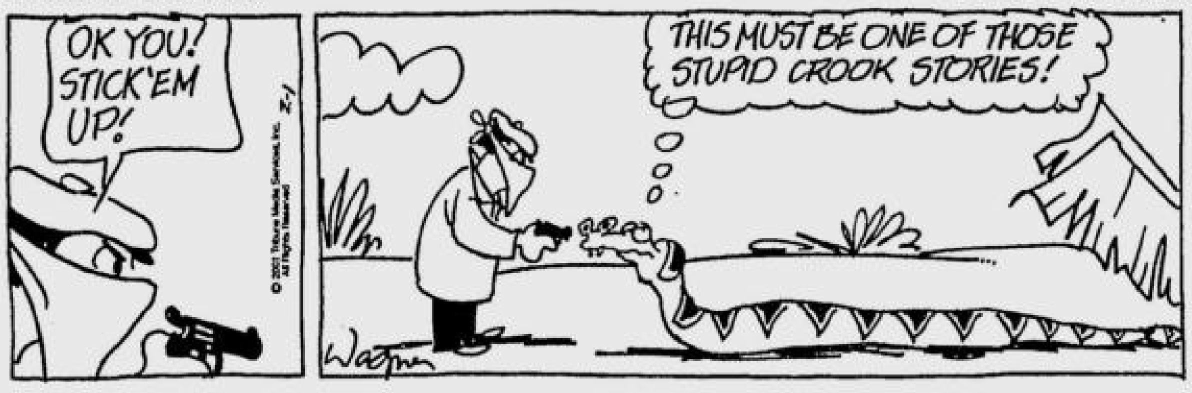
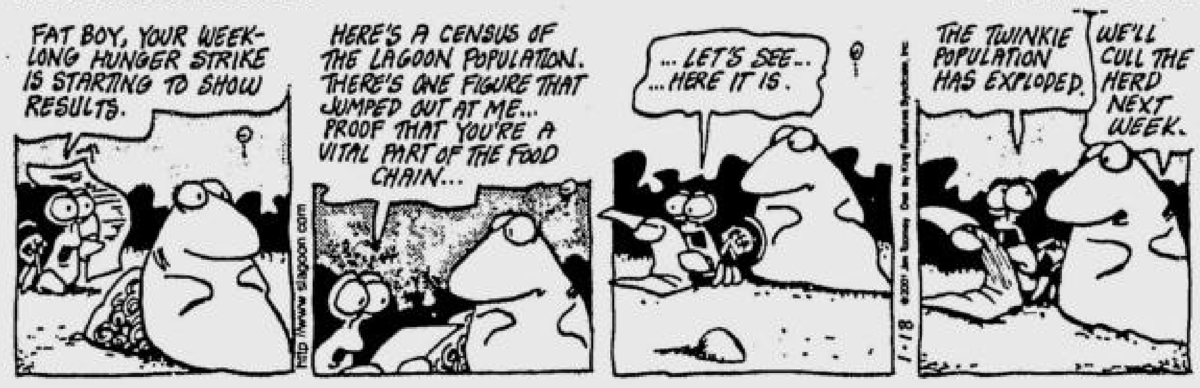
ANIMAL CRACKER

BY FRED WAGNER


OK YOU! STICK'EM UP!
THIS MUST BE ONE OF THOSE STUPID CROOK STORIES!
Wagner

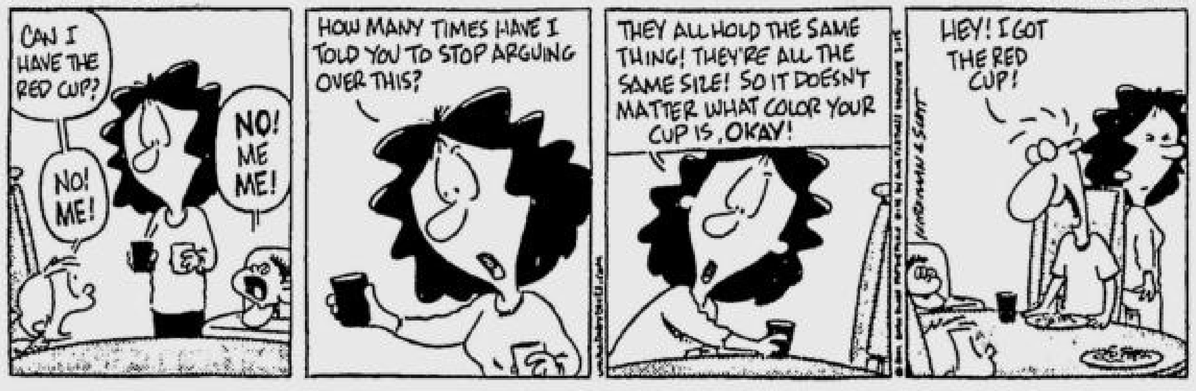
SHERMAN'S LAGOON

BY JIM TOOMEY


FAT BOY, YOUR WEEK-LONG HUNGER STRIKE IS STARTING TO SHOW RESULTS.
HERE'S A CENSUS OF THE LAGOON POPULATION. THERE'S ONE FIGURE THAT JUMPED OUT AT ME... PROOF THAT YOU'RE A VITAL PART OF THE FOOD CHAIN...
... LET'S SEE... ...HERE IT IS.
THE TWINKIE POPULATION HAS EXPLODED.
WE'LL CULL THE HERD NEXT WEEK.
http://www.slagoon.com
1-18

BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


CAN I HAVE THE RED CUP?
NO! ME!
NO! ME ME!
HOW MANY TIMES HAVE I TOLD YOU TO STOP ARGUING OVER THIS?
THEY ALL HOLD THE SAME THING! THEY'RE ALL THE SAME SIZE! SO IT DOESN'T MATTER WHAT COLOR YOUR CUP IS, OKAY!
HEY! I GOT THE RED CUP!
KIRKMAN & SCOTT

HOROSCOPE

BY EUGENIA LAST

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Dinah Shore, Ron Howard, Harry Belafonte, Ralph Ellison; Alan Thicke, Timothy Daly, Roger Daltrey, Mark-Paul Gosselaar

Happy Birthday: The opportunities will be there this year, but if you're caught up in emotional matters, you may miss out. Try to keep your personal and professional life separate and you'll do just fine. Your ability to complete what you start is a plus. If you can present your ideas with confidence, you'll be headed to the main event. Your numbers: 12, 16, 20, 35, 44, 47

ARIES (March 21-April 19): You should extend a helping hand to friends or relatives having trouble updating their personal investments or papers. Your kind gesture will be handsomely rewarded.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Don't let dilemmas in your personal life get you too worked up. Try to make arrangements to spend some time with your mate to clear up any misunderstandings you might have.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Your emotional attitude toward colleagues may lack professionalism. Don't become involved in legal battles concerning the personal lives of others.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Your discipline will pay off. Make sure you listen carefully to others' thoughts. The insight obtained will be far more beneficial than you imagine.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Sudden changes regarding friends will puzzle those close to you. Don't act in haste; think twice before you make decisions. Don't take unnecessary risks with your career. It is wise to sit back and observe those around you.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): You can learn a lot if you listen to the words of those who are experienced in your field. Take time to plan your actions. You need to be positive that you are headed in the right direction.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): You can beautify your surroundings by renovating or redecorating. If you find that your plans will cost more than you had wanted to spend, try to do the work yourself.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): You may be led astray if you listen to a big talker today. Do a little research before getting involved in a financial venture that may be risky.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Be careful. You may feel like eating hot spicy foods, but be prepared to pay the price if you lack moderation. Spend time catching up.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Look for activities that will please your whole family. Organize social functions or gatherings. You need to get back to basics and family values.

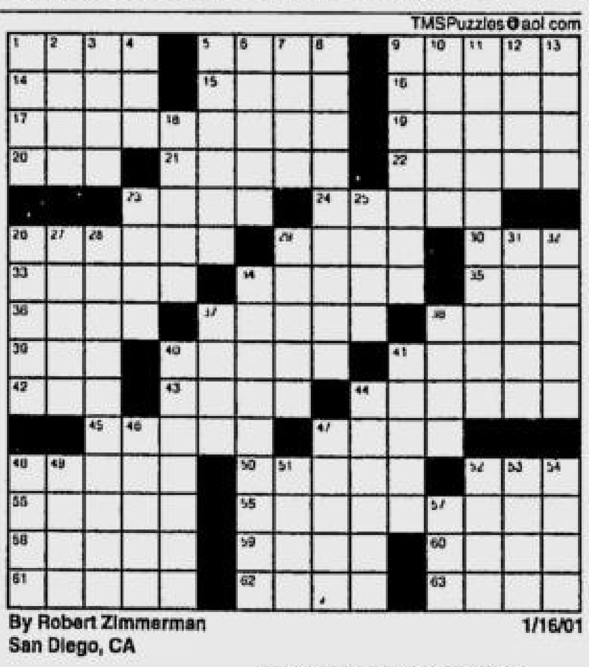
AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): You are likely to jump from the frying pan into the fire if you make a move today. Someone may not be thinking of your best interests. Don't be too hard on your partner.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Getting out with friends will be half the battle. You can meet an ideal mate if you're willing to become involved in organizational events. Don't hesitate to make a move if someone interests you. Act on your first instincts.

Birthday Baby: High energy and curiosity can lead you in many directions. You have the need to explore and won't think twice about checking something out without asking first. You are an adventurer who will always have a great story to tell.

DAILY CROSSWORD

TMSPuzzles@aol.com


1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60 61 62 63

By Robert Zimmerman
San Diego, CA
1/16/01

ACROSS
1 Lendl of tennis
5 Lake formed by Hoover Dam
9 Brown pigment
14 Muses or Mets
15 Covetousness
16 Bellini opera
17 Whitney invention
19 Characteristic
20 Tavern order
21 Enchilada topping
22 Raves
23 Speed contest
24 Pitcher's spot
26 Human face
29 Effort
30 Evergreen shrub
33 Nonsensical
34 Eighth letter
35 Open hostilities
36 Cloth gather
37 Cliff-base rock pile
38 Issue a ticket to
39 Biblical boat
40 Supports
41 Window parts
42 __ G. Carroll
43 Is sick
44 See the error of one's ways
45 Bub
47 __-noire (bugbear)
48 French historian Albert
50 Miffed to the max
52 London hrs.
55 Hold dear
56 "Le prophete" composer
58 End point
59 Son of Seth
60 "Do __ others as..."
61 Leg joints
62 Resounding defeat
63 Require

DOWN
1 Atahualpa, e.g.
2 Stringed instrument
3 Pot starter
4 Lepidopterist's equipment
5 Threaten
6 "A Wrinkle in Time" author Madeleine L'__
7 Hertz rival
8 Blows up
9 Lie
10 Erin of "Happy Days"
11 1777 battle site in Pennsylvania
12 Send out
13 Curses!
18 River through the Lake of the Ozarks
23 Standing
25 As soon as
26 Crucial
27 Accustom
28 410 event
29 Daggers
31 Consumed
32 Take by force
34 Praise singer
37 Take to the ocean
38 Promontory
40 Dance performances
41 Finch or Bogdanovich
44 Perform a new examination
46 Spooky
47 Linda Ronstadt song, "Blue __"
48 Polio vaccine developer
49 Chief Norse deity
51 Vegas rival
52 Kelly or Autry
53 Apportion (out)
54 Stepped (on)
57 Hot-dog holder

PREVIOUS PUZZLE ANSWER

A	S	O	F	■	S	A	Y	S	O	■	B	O	P	S
R	A	V	E	■	T	R	E	E	D	■	O	R	A	L
U	R	A	L	■	R	A	T	E	D	■	R	E	L	Y
B	I	L	L	R	O	B	I	N	S	O	N	■	■	■
A	S	S	A	I	L	■	■	■	■	L	E	A	S	T
■	■	■	W	I	L	M	A	R	U	D	O	L	P	H
S	T	O	A	S	■	A	F	O	R	E	■	L	I	E
H	A	Z	Y	■	E	R	O	S	E	■	S	A	L	S
E	P	A	■	O	L	I	O	S	■	S	T	Y	L	E
L	E	W	I	S	L	A	T	I	M	E	R	■	■	■
F	R	A	N	S	■	■	■	■	E	L	A	T	E	S
■	■	■	J	A	M	E	S	B	A	L	D	W	I	N
C	A	P	E	■	A	L	T	O	S	■	D	E	L	I
A	L	E	C	■	S	M	A	L	L	■	L	E	A	D
R	A	N	T	■	H	O	N	E	Y	■	E	T	T	E

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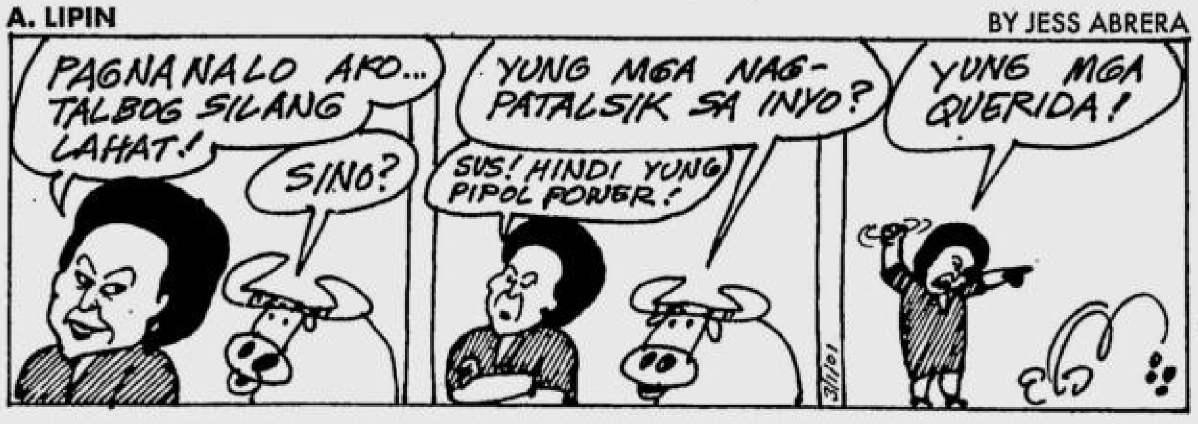
1/16/01

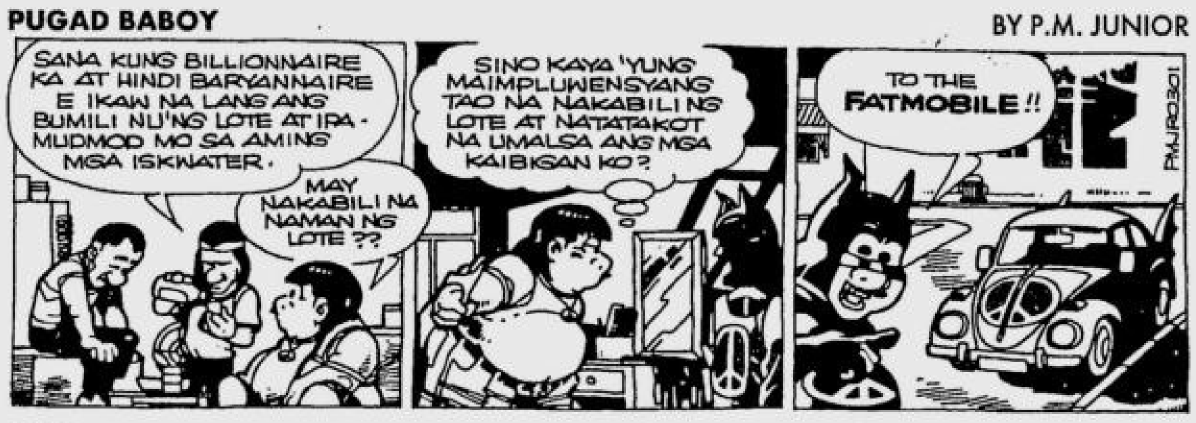
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


PAGNANALO AKO... TALBOG SILANG LAHAT!
SINO?
YUNG MGA NAG-PATALSIK SA INYO?
SUS! HINDI YUNG PIPOL POWER!
YUNG MGA QUERIDA!
3/1/01

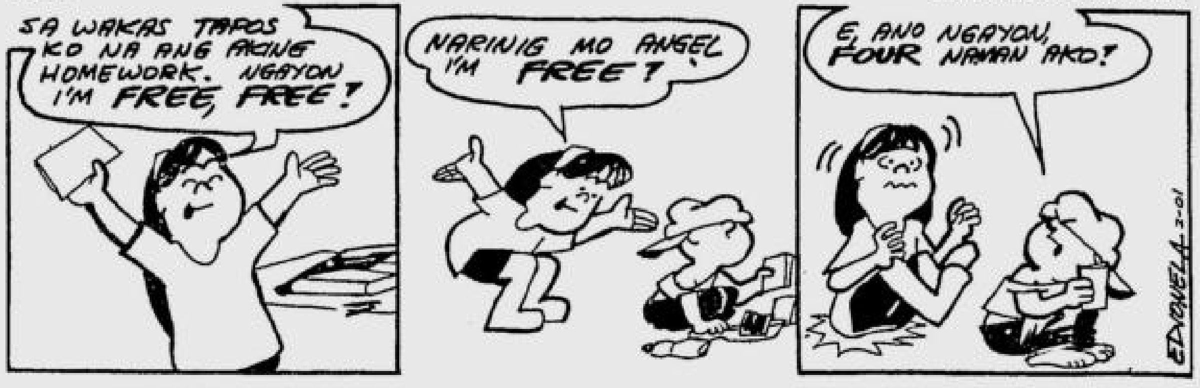
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


SANA KUNG BILLIONNAIRE KA AT HINDI BARYANNAIRE E IKAW NA LANG ANG BUMILI NU'NG LOTE AT IPAMUDMOD MO SA AMING MGA ISKWATER.
MAY NAKABILI NA NAMAN NG LOTE ??
SINO KAYA 'YUNG MAIMPLUWENSYANG TAO NA NAKABILI NG LOTE AT NATATAKOT NA UMALSA ANG MGA KAIBIGAN KO?
TO THE FATMOBILE!!
PMJR0301

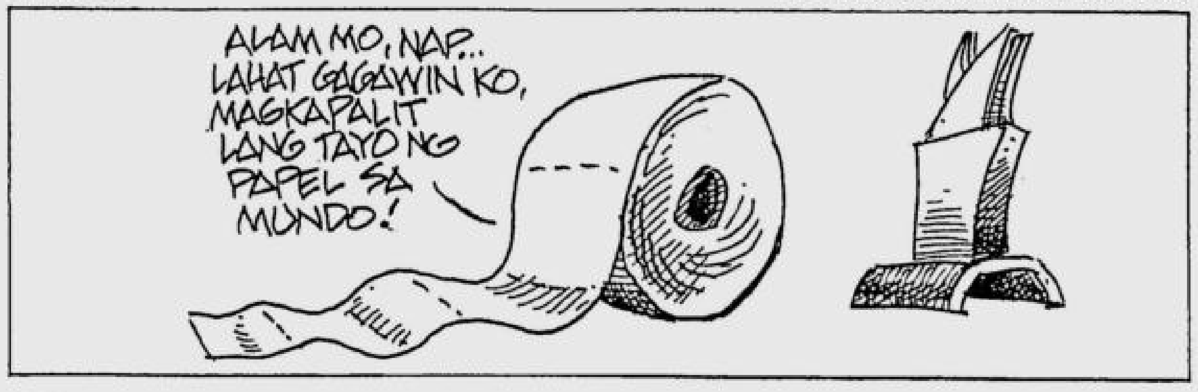
SIMO

BY EDGAR DIONELA


SA WAKAS TAPOS KO NA ANG AKING HOMEWORK. NGAYON I'M FREE, FREE!
NARINIG MO ANGEL I'M FREE?
E, ANO NGAYON, FOUR NAMAN AKO?
EDIONELA 3-01

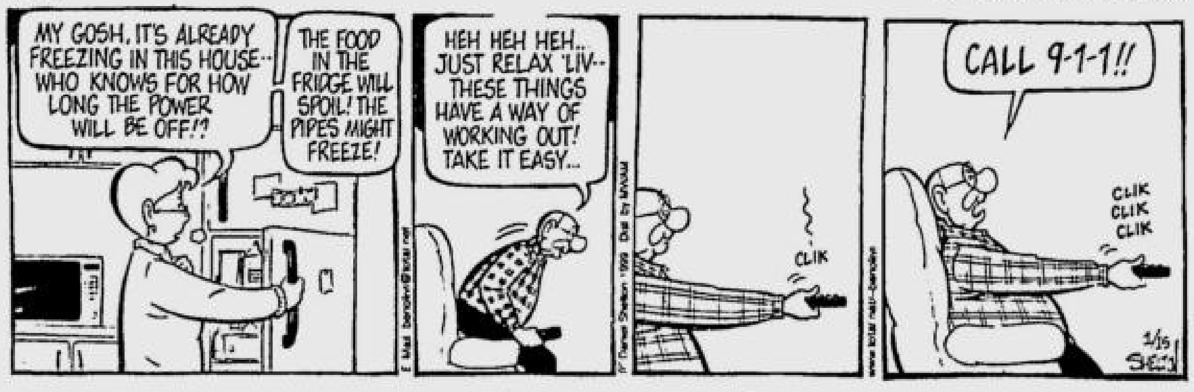
TULDOK

BY PAPU & TATUM MILAMBILING


ALAM MO, NAP... LAHAT GAGAWIN KO, MAGKAPALIT LANG TAYO NG PAPEL SA MUNDO!

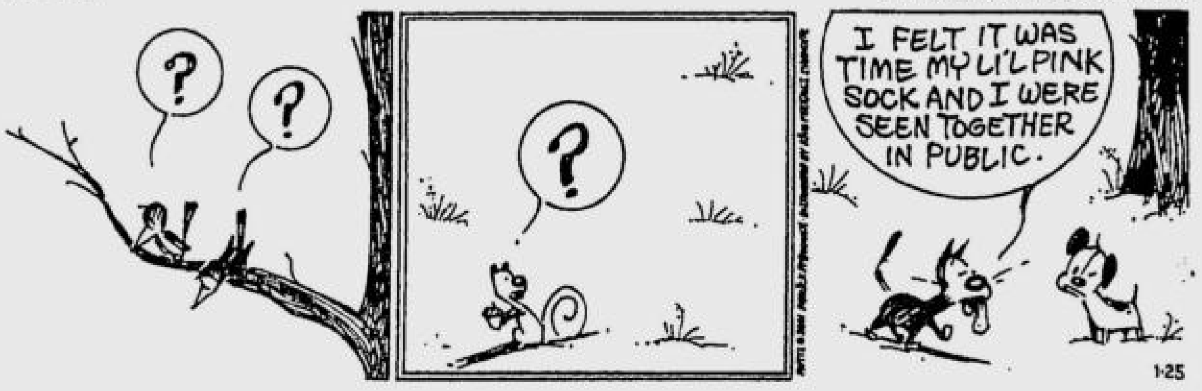
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


MY GOSH, IT'S ALREADY FREEZING IN THIS HOUSE·· WHO KNOWS FOR HOW LONG THE POWER WILL BE OFF!?
THE FOOD IN THE FRIDGE WILL SPOIL! THE PIPES MIGHT FREEZE!
HEH HEH HEH.. JUST RELAX 'LIV'·· THESE THINGS HAVE A WAY OF WORKING OUT! TAKE IT EASY...
CLIK
CALL 9-1-1!!
CLIK CLIK CLIK
1/15 SHELTON

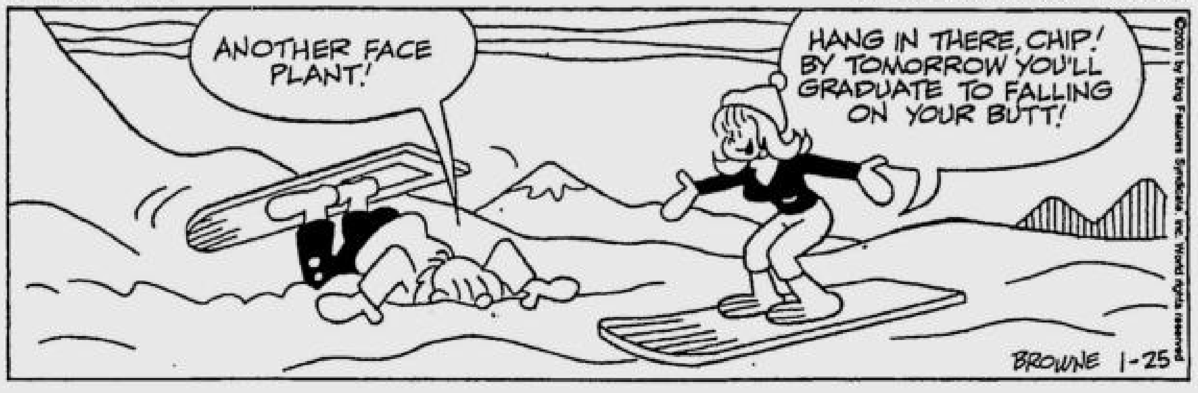
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


?
?
?
I FELT IT WAS TIME MY LI'L PINK SOCK AND I WERE SEEN TOGETHER IN PUBLIC.
1-25

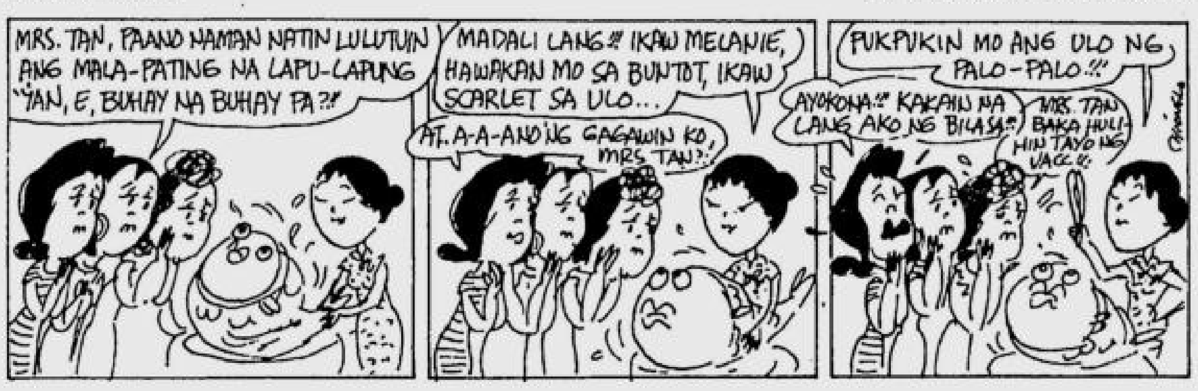
HI AND LOIS

BY BRIAN & GREG WALKER


ANOTHER FACE PLANT!
HANG IN THERE, CHIP! BY TOMORROW YOU'LL GRADUATE TO FALLING ON YOUR BUTT!
BROWNE 1-25

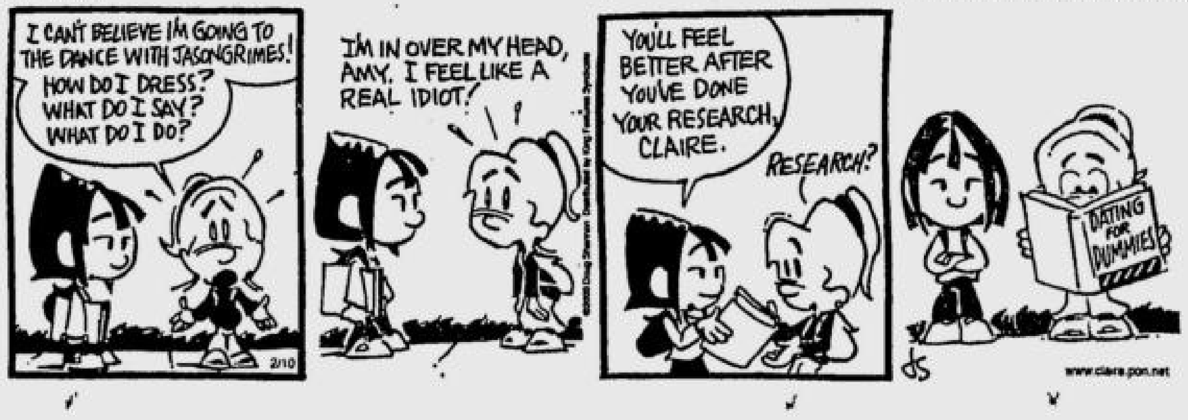
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


MRS. TAN, PAANO NAMAN NATIN LULUTUIN ANG MALA-PATING NA LAPU-LAPUNG 'YAN, E, BUHAY NA BUHAY PA?!
MADALI LANG!!! IKAW MELANIE, HAWAKAN MO SA BUNTOT, IKAW SCARLET SA ULO...
AT. A-A-ANO'NG GAGAWIN KO, MRS TAN?!
PUKPUKIN MO ANG ULO NG PALO-PALO!!!
AYOKONA!! KAKAIN NA LANG AKO NG BILASA!!
MRS. TAN BAKA HULIHIN TAYO NG VACC!!

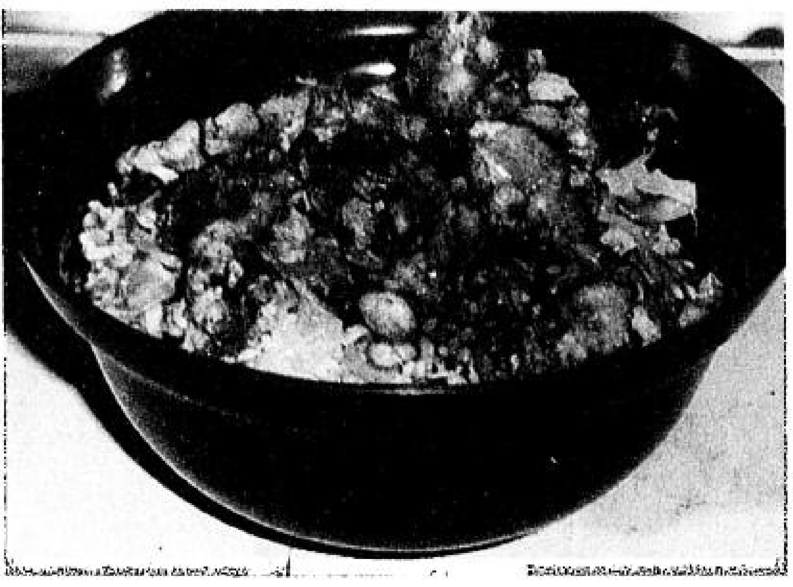
CLAIRE

BY DOUG SHANNON


I CAN'T BELIEVE I'M GOING TO THE DANCE WITH JASON GRIMES! HOW DO I DRESS? WHAT DO I SAY? WHAT DO I DO?
2/10
I'M IN OVER MY HEAD, AMY. I FEEL LIKE A REAL IDIOT!
YOU'LL FEEL BETTER AFTER YOU'VE DONE YOUR RESEARCH, CLAIRE.
RESEARCH?
DATING FOR DUMMIES
ds
www.claire.pon.net

SauceMaria!
Mapapamura ka sa sarap!

No copying now, but Sauce Maria has been arousing the curiosity of fast-food diners with its name and its gourmet gravy



The secret is in the sauce–and the name

FAST food for the longest time has been synonymous with burgers, pizza, dim sum and home-style Filipino food. Go food court-hopping in all the malls in search of something new and exciting for the palate and you'll end up with the same old fare. *Sosmarya*, give us a break.

The operative word in fast food, of course, is "cheap." But who made the rule that value meals should not at least be decent and enjoyable?

So 25-year-old Allen Tan thought of offering malls rats like himself good food that's affordable. Having studied French and Mediterranean cuisine at the Pacific Institute of Culinary Arts in Canada, where he also worked in bistros and restaurants, Tan first thought of putting up a theme restaurant. But as that would require a huge capital, he toyed with concepts that would mean low start-up but high take-up.

"We wanted to offer a broader base of customers good food, which meant it should not be upscale," says Al. "But that was only as far as pricing was concerned. The quality of the choices should be different and superior to what they get at most fast-food stores."

Together with his girlfriend Tricia Nuguid, his brothers Hans and Michael, and Michael's girlfriend Susan So, Al opened Sauce Maria at the food court of Ever Gotesco Mall in Recto last January.

"Putting it up was easy. We had a lot of fun conceptualizing. The hard part is running it day to day," Al confesses. They get headaches managing the inventory and guarding against any spoilage. And Al, the lord of the kitchen, fusses over the quality of their finished product, making sure they do not serve burnt food. He works 12 hours, seven days a week.

Customer's choice

The concept is very simple: customers choose the type of meat (beef, pork, or chicken) which is grilled to perfection. Then they choose the sauce to go over the grilled meat. Finally, they have the option whether to have rice or *bihon* noodles.

Al whips up magical sauces. He has reinvented the sauce, which is French in origin, with flavors and spices unique to the Filipino's liking. "Pinoys are sauce lovers. They like sauce on their rice."

And so the catchy name Sauce Maria. They wanted a name that says what their food is all about. The name has aroused curiosity, and so has the tagline "*Mapapamura ka sa sarap.*"

People have ask whether the food is Chinese or Mexican. "It's neither Chinese nor Mexican. It's not even fusion. But people can call it anything they want. It all boils down to something as basic as the sauce," reveals the genius behind the unique recipes.

Customers can take their pick from the Herb Sauce with the distinct sweetness and aroma of tarragon herb with white wine. Or Sauce de Puta, an adaptation of the original Italian putanesca sauce mixed with anchovies. Or Curry, a French-Indian combo with a unique tangy, fruity and spicy flavor. Then there's Spicy Shrimp, à la lobster bisque or Thai Barbecue with chili garlic paste for those with a craving for hot food. The less adventurous, of course, will never go wrong with the regular brown gravy.

And where do the *bihon* noodles come in? Like rice, *bihon* has become a staple at Sauce Maria. Al uses *bihon* instead of pasta as it is easier to mix with any kind of sauce.

With Sauce Maria's initial success, Al continues to innovate in the kitchen. His newest concoctions are the Adobo and the Sweet and Sour sauces, which are turning out to be more appealing to the market.

Because of the young, creative team behind it, Sauce Maria will never put out so-so meals. Even in the fast-food court.

Happy Birthday! Congratulations! I love you!
Get Well Soon! Thank you! Happy Anniversary!
Whatever your message, sweeten it with a ***candy and chocolate bouquet!*** Bursting with colorful accents and sumptuous goodies, our bouquet is a sweet alternative to ordinary floral arrangements. Cheer up someone today!
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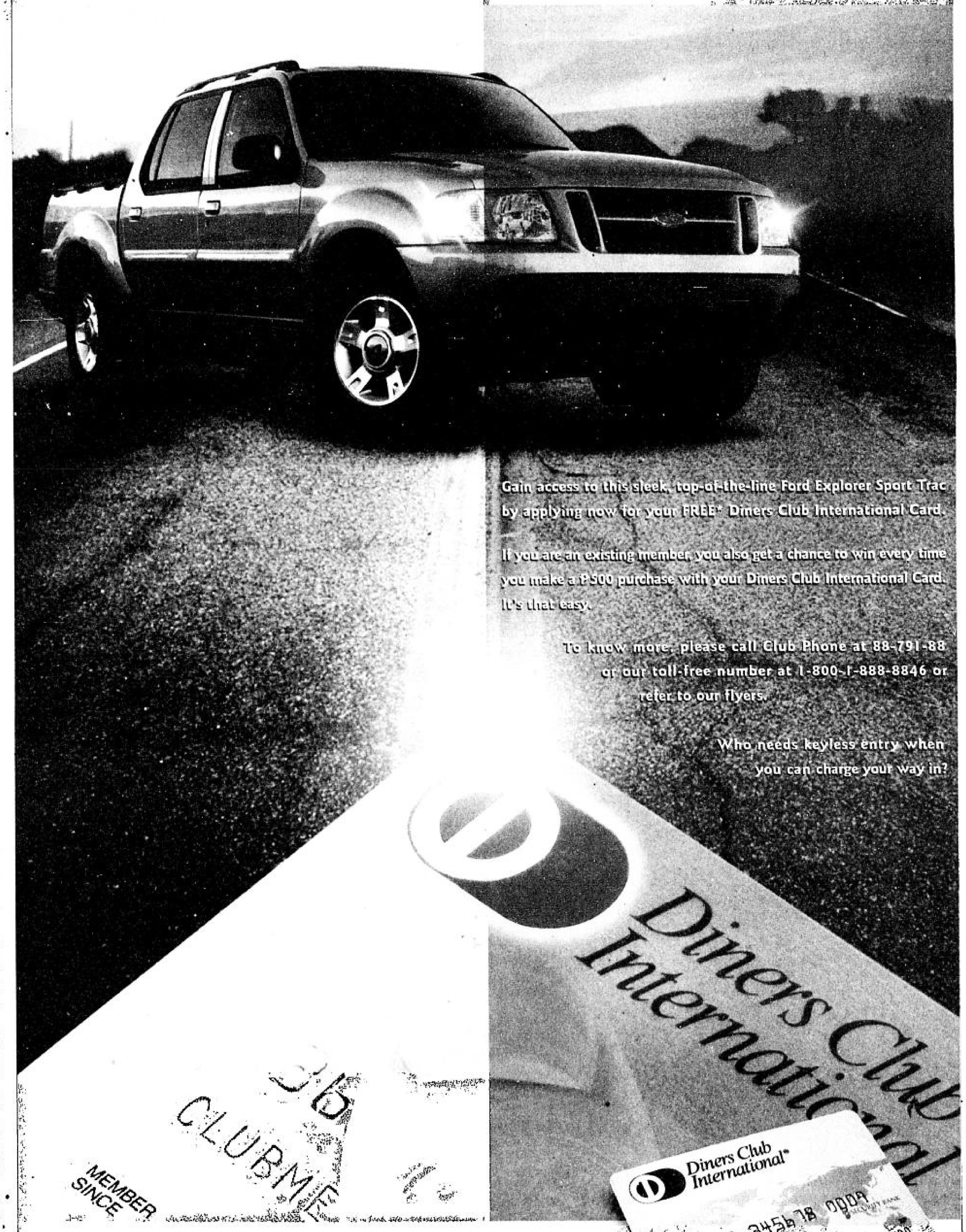

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A Step Up.

Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 0103, Series of 2001

ITALIANNI'S Amaretto Cream Strawberry

So berry extraordinary

ENJOYED on their own, strawberries are heavenly. Combined with other ingredients to make for a sweet treat, they're twice as great. No wonder strawberries are popular anytime, anywhere. Among local restaurants, Italianni's is one that offers strawberry desserts that are so delicious. Recently, US-based corporate Chef John Metz introduced the Amarette Cream Strawberry, fresh strawberries in Amaretto-balsamic sauce topped with whipped cream.

But do you know that there's more to the strawberry than meets the palate? Nutrition experts have identified several health benefits of strawberries that can be enjoyed by everyone, from infanticipating moms to fitness watchers. Here, Italianni's Restaurant shares with you some of them.

- One serving of strawberries contains 20 percent of the recommended daily allowance (RDA) of folic acid, a water soluble B vitamin that has been proven to reduce birth defects involving brain and nerve disorders.
- Strawberries are likewise rich in Vitamin C, a potent antioxidant that helps protect the body against aging and oral, esophageal, stomach, colon and lung cancers. Nutrition experts say that eight medium strawberries provide 96 mg of Vitamin C or 160 percent of the recommended daily intake, which is more than an orange can provide. US studies also indicate that a strawberry's antioxidant capacity is seven times more than those found in apples or bananas and twice that in oranges and grapes.
- Figure conscious? Then take a serving of strawberries. According to the United States FDA, they're sodium free, fat free and cholesterol free.
- Strawberries also help you fiber up. Health experts say one cup of strawberries contains 4 g of dietary fiber, which helps lower blood cholesterol, the risk of heart disease and colon cancer, and promote a healthy digestive system.

Italianni's Restaurant's newest sweet treat, the Amaretto Cream Strawberry, is so easy to make. All you need are fresh strawberries, balsamic vinegar and a scoop of whip cream.

Amaretto Cream Strawberry

2 c fresh strawberries
6 ml balsamic vinegar
6 ml sugar
A scoop of Amaretto whip cream
Mint leaf

Mix balsamic vinegar and sugar. Pour in 2 c of fresh strawberries. Top with Amaretto whip cream. Garnish with mint leaf.

Say cheese rolls

THERE'S nothing like the scent of freshly baked bread wafting from your oven to fill your home with a sense of family and good food. Don that apron, bring out the rolling pin and start your way on an Italian bread-baking experience.

This easy cheese bread recipe using three different kinds of Galbani Italian cheese is from culinary expert Chef Reggie Aspiras. Galbani cheese is available at Santi's Delicatessen Shops at Yakal, Forbes, Greenhills, Alabang, Timog, Silang, Rockwell and Rustan's Makati. All other ingredients are also available in all Santi's Deli outlets.

Crusty Cheese Rolls

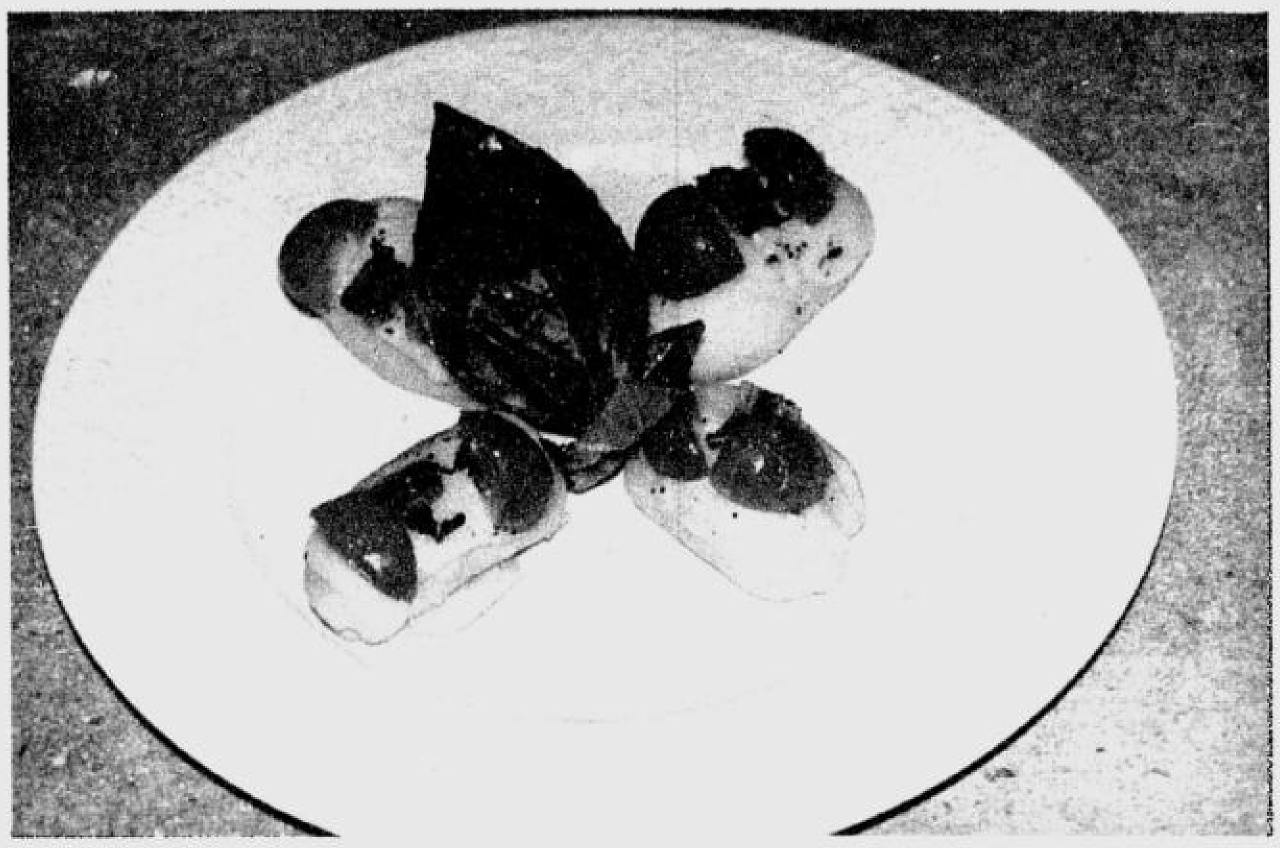
1 tbsp yeast
1 tsp sugar
1¼ c warm water (not to exceed 110°F)
2 tbsp olive oil
4 c all-purpose flour
2 tsp salt
1 c freshly grated Galbani Parmesan cheese
2 pkg Galbani bel passe
6 cherry tomatoes, sliced in halves
¼ c finely chopped basil leaves
1 c fresh Galbani mozzarella cheese

Preheat oven to 425°F. In a bowl, combine and mix sugar and yeast. Pour warm water into the mixture to activate the yeast. Cover bowl completely with a damp, clean cloth and wait 10-15 minutes until yeast mixture becomes bubbly. (Remember that yeast rises faster in a warm kitchen.) Stir in oil. Whisk in 3½ c of the flour a little at a time, not mixing heavily. (For crustier bread, mix flour heavily.)

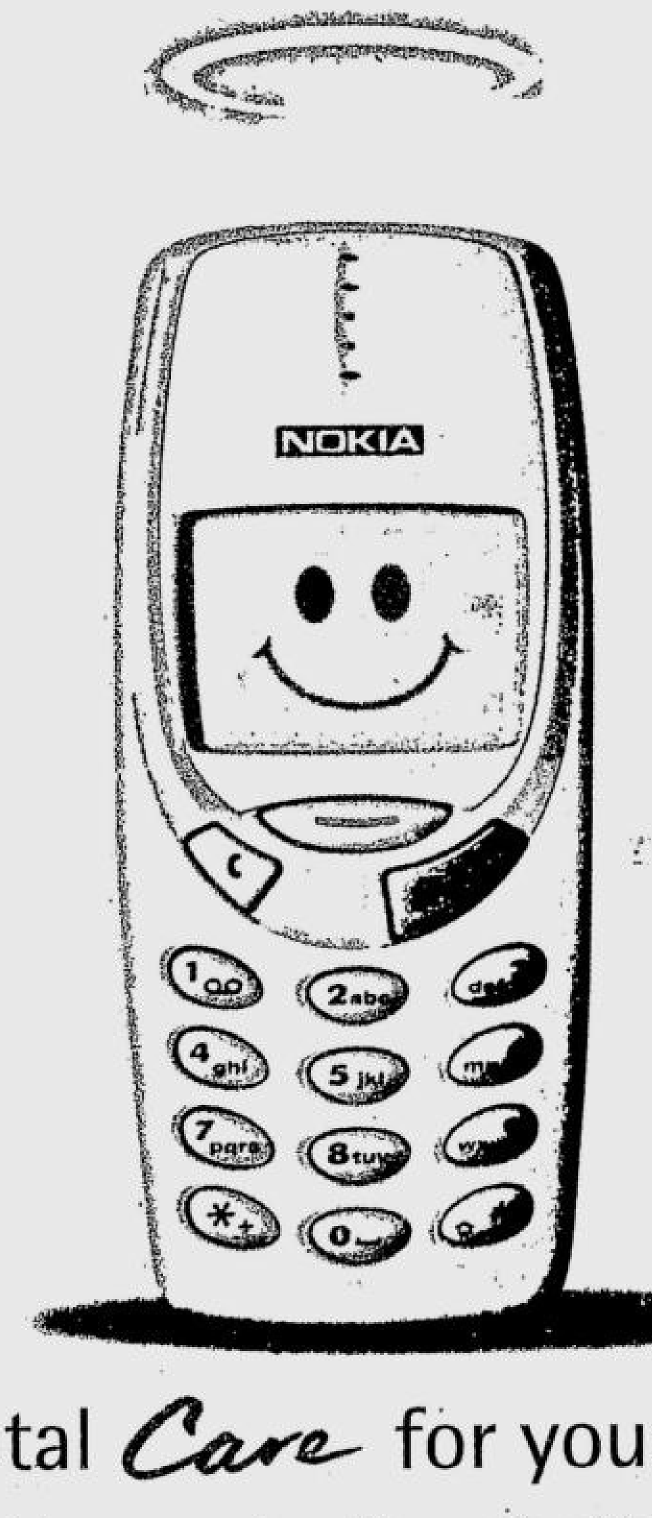
Add in salt and Parmesan cheese. Turn the dough out onto a floured surface. Knead the dough by pressing it with the base of your palm and turning dough back in to form a ball. If the dough sticks to the palm of your hand, sprinkle a little flour on the surface and knead the flour into the dough. Keep adding in flour until the dough is elastic and smooth. Form the dough into a ball and put in an oiled bowl. Turn the dough to coat it with oil. Leave the dough to "proof" for at least 20 minutes. Let the dough rise until it is double in bulk.

Turn the dough out onto a floured surface and divide into 12 equal pieces. Form each into balls and flatten with the palms of your hand to release the air inside. Roll the dough balls again and press edges together to flatten the sides. Transfer the balls to a lightly oiled baking sheet and let them rise until they are almost double in bulk.

Brush rolls with a little olive oil and bake for 15-20 minutes or until golden brown. Top baked rolls with tomatoes, more mozzarella and bel paese cheese, a little olive oil, chopped parsley and pepper.



NOKIA
CONNECTING PEOPLE



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NOKIA *Care*

www.nokia-asia.com

Using fake accessories voids the manufacturers' warranty and it could also decrease the specified talktime and standby time of your Nokia mobile phone.

+ Only applies to handsets originally sourced from authorized distributors of Nokia (Philippines), Inc.; * Nominal charge will be applied to cosmetic replacements.

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Delightful bites of Spanish 'tapas'

JUST as the *paella* is an integral part of the Spanish culinary landscape, so are the Spanish appetizers called *tapas*. And like the *paella*, *tapas* can vary from the simple to the complex—from fried almonds and olives to spicy meatballs and skewered lamb.

Las Paellas de Alba Restaurant alone offers more than 20 different *tapas* that can serve as perfect meal starters or can be enjoyed on their own.

Where did *tapas* come from? Las Paellas lets you in on the story behind these delightful little bites.

Tapa, which literally means lid or cover, is thought to have originally referred to the complimentary plate of appetizers that *tascas* (Spanish tape bars) would place like a cover on one's wine glass. While some food historians say its origins can be traced to Spanish King Alfonso X, who decreed that bars should not serve wine unless they are accompanied by food, others say the *tapas* originated from Andalucia. The province is known for its long summer days and warm summer evenings where locals enjoyed chilled sherries and tasty snacks outdoors.

Still some maintained that the practice of eating *tapas* originated out of the need of farmers and laborers to take a small amount of food while working as this allowed them to continue with the rigorous jobs until the main meal's time.

You see, Spaniards eat *tapas* in between the day's principal meals—at 1 p.m. before a three-course lunch and at 8 p.m. or later before a 10 p.m. supper.

Tapa varieties are as varied as the ingredients indigenous to a particular region. Cheese ingredients include the Manchego (made from ewe's milk), the Monte Enebro (a delicious soft goat's cheese) and Picos Blue (senred wrapped in maple leaves). Then there are the chorines, clams, garlic, *jamon serrano*, mussels, olives, paprika, roasted peppers, saffron, say cod, scallops, anchovies, squid, etc.

Las Paellas de Alba offers such *tapa* varieties as the Jamon Serrano (thin slices of cured ham), Salchicon (Spanish salami), Alcachofas à la Alba con Jamon (artichoke Alba style sautéed with jamon), Angulas à la Cazuela (young eels in garlic and chili pepper) and Champinones Al Ajillo (button mushrooms in olive oil with garlic and chili pepper), among others.

As varied as the ingredients are the different *tapa* preparations. These include the *machacadas* (crushed), *gordales* (big), *rellenas* (stuffed) *alinadas* (flavored), *deshuesadas* (boneless) and the fried ones like the *calamares*, sausages, croquets and potatoes.

Tapas are traditionally taken with wine, sherry, vermouth or sangria.

At Las Paella de Alba, an order of four different kinds of *tapas* entitles diners to a complimentary pitcher of sangria.

Explore the delicious world of *tapas* and try some of your favorite Spanish dishes like the *paellas*, *lengua*, *callos*, and *bacalao* at Las Paellas de Alba in Alabang Zapote Road in Muntinlupa and at Tomas Morato in Quezon City. Call 807-0352.

TAPAS are served with wine at Las Paellas de Alba.

Cooking in class

LEARN the art of Japanese cooking from renowned Chef Edi San at an affordable price. Edi spent 15 years working as a sushi chef in Tokyo, Japan. He is now in Manila running his own restaurant and offering cooking classes to interested parties, with hands-on participation and only the freshest, imported ingredients.

The chef will be holding one-day classes on Japanese Lunch Special Cooking (menu: Chawan Mushi, Ebi Tempura, Japanese Fried Rice) on March 5, 8 a.m.-12 nn; and Sushi Making (menu: original and variation sushi) on March 10, 8 a.m.-12 nn. Advance registration is required.

Call Japs at 532-6395, text/call (0917)935-4938 or e-mail cbcm@-edsamail.com.ph.

CHEF Leung Kin On of Hong Kong

TRIO. Master Chef Ed Quimson, known for his tasteful culinary expertise and as the proponent of East-West cuisine in the country, is offering a cooking program at Brada Gallery, along with partners chefs Ronald Sampaga and Robert Aguiles.

Brada Gallery was founded early last year by Quimson, Sampaga and Aguiles when they met and came out with a concept of putting up a cooking school. Asked why they ventured into the business of teaching compared to food preparation and restaurateur, Sampaga said there were more options in teaching than in cooking. They also believe it is far more fulfilling to impart ideas than keeping it within the industry.

Quimson was with La Tasca and the Philippine Stock Exchange, where Sampaga and Aguiles also came from.

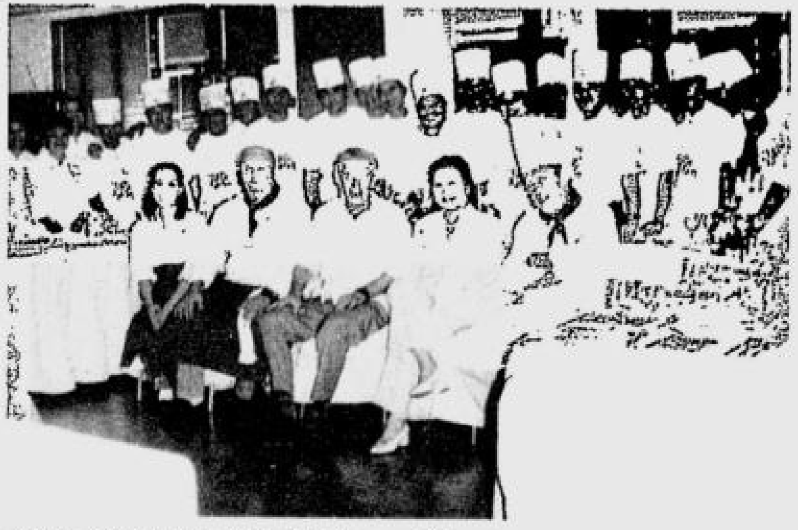
Call 893-7677, fax 892-7842 or visit Brada Gallery at 5/F Creekside Mall, Amorsolo Street, Makati City.

DUTCH. Filipino seafarers enjoyed a "Dutch treat" recently as the preeminent Maya Kitchen Culinary Arts School hosted a 17-day course on Dutch cooking under the tutelage of Roc Zadkine Culinair of the Netherlands consultant director Joop Egbers and chefs Thomas Scheepers and Edward Slui.

The esteemed culinary school undertook the special classes to provide Filipino seafarers with formal training in Dutch cooking, which is a prerequisite for service in a Dutch flagship. The course, which also drew Russian participants, included hygiene and sanitation; butchering; salad and soup preparation; potato dishes preparation; fish, meat and poultry main course, stocks; and baking. Each graduate received a certification of completion from the Dutch government itself.

The Maya Kitchen Culinary Arts School embarked on this special 17-day cooking course with the Dutch Embassy and in collaboration with Roc Zadkine Culinair of the Netherlands.

Maya Kitchen is located on the 8/F, Liberty Building, A. Arnaiz Avenue (formerly Pasay Road), Makati City or call 892-1185, 892-5011, locals 108 or 109.



GRADUATES of Maya Kitchen's Dutch Cooking Class with chefs Joop Egbers, Thomas Scheepers and Edward Slui and Rory Subida

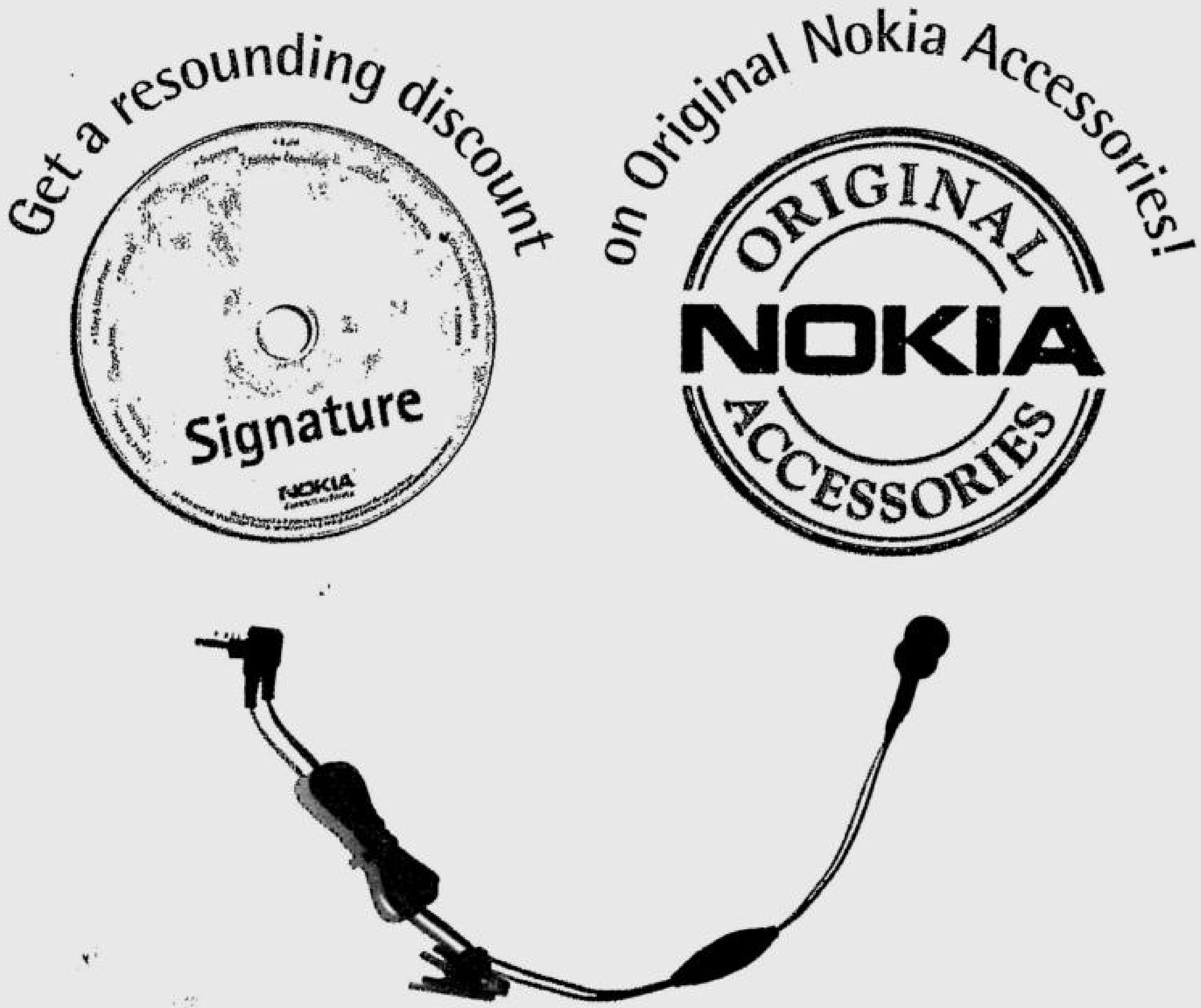
Lanot book to be launched today

"WITCH'S Dance at Iba Pang Tula sa Filipino at Español" by Marra PL. Lanot will be launched twice this March.

The first launching will be today at 6:30 p.m., at the Instituto Cervantes at 2515 Leon Guinto corner Estrada, Malate, Manila, sponsored by Instituto Cervantes.

The second one will be on March 16, 3-6:30 p.m., at the Ateneo Library of Women's Writings (Aliww), 2/F Ateneo Art Gallery, Diliman, QC, sponsored by Anvil Publishing with Aliww.

"Witch's Dance" is published by Anvil, with cover and inside illustrations by well-known painter Bencab. Lanot is a prizewinning poet-essayist and freelance journalist who writes in English and Filipino, and occasionally in Spanish. She is the author of "Sheaves of Things Burning," "Flowers of the Sun" and "Passion and Compassion" (poetry books); "Dream Sketches" and "The Trouble with Nick and Other Profiles" (profiles); and "Déjà vu and Other Essays."



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So lucky at Ebisu

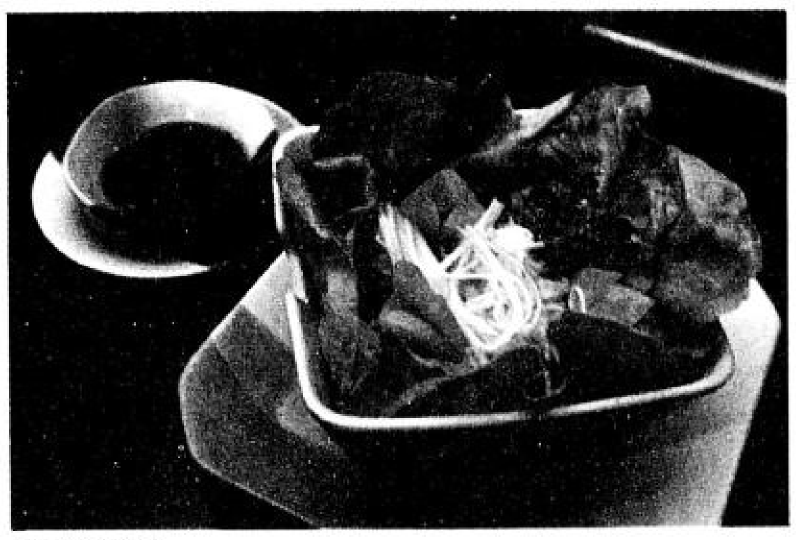
(From page C1)

the restaurant Toque in Quezon City.

Japanese cuisine, like its culture, is thousands of years old, and revolves around a handful of staples. Yet within that palette, there is variety and subtlety.

Intensely flavored

At Ebisu, meals which are designed by Abaya and Picache are so dauntingly good, so loaded with impressive ingredients that you feel almost bullied into admiring them. When you're presented with Japanese noodles with ground pork on a sizzling plate and fried rice (a meal in itself) in one serving, you begin to suspect that you are in the hands of a mad couple.



EBISU Salad

Our meal began with Ebisu Salad (butter lettuce with soy-sesame dressing) and Agedashi Tofu (breaded tofu with teriyaki sauce). That was followed by Ninniku Cheese Steak (seared tenderloin with garlic, topped with cream cheese), Shake No Miso Butter (seared salmon marinated in miso, topped with wasabi butter), Ebisu Chicken (teppanyaki chicken in a garlic-soy marinade) and Yaki Udon (Japanese noodles with ground pork on a sizzling plate). Then there's Australian Lamb, which is a must-have if you're going for the grills. Banana Fritters (fried bananas coated with a bit of rum and with ice cream on the side) make for just dessert.

Lunch and dinner are indeed a great bargain here. Feasts can be had at P500-P1,000. For starters, try Edamame (steamed soybeans), Shake Sashimi (fresh salmon), Miso Soup, Gyoza (steamed dumplings), Tofu Steak (tofu wrapped in beef), Tori Karaage (fried chicken), Nasu Furai (breaded eggplant), Corn Yaki (grilled sweet corn), Tebasaki (grilled chicken wings), Tori Kawa (grilled chicken skin), Buta Yaki (grilled pork belly) and Yasai Itame (sauteed vegetables).

Then feast on entrées such as Tonkatsu (breaded pork chop) or grilled wonders like US Black Angus Rib-eye, US Shortribs, Tenderloin, Chicken, Tiger Prawns, Calamari and Garlic Yaki. And relish desserts such as Mango Jubilee, Ice Cream Cake and Green Tea Ice Cream.

AUSTRALIAN Lamb

FAMILIES and couples like to frequent Ebisu.

BANANA Fritters

Aside from the variety of its menu, the appeal of Ebisu's meals can be attributed to their natural flavor and fresh imported ingredients. The dishes are generally healthy and light, which today's diet-conscious Filipinos look for. They are low in cholesterol because frying is done only with vegetable oil.

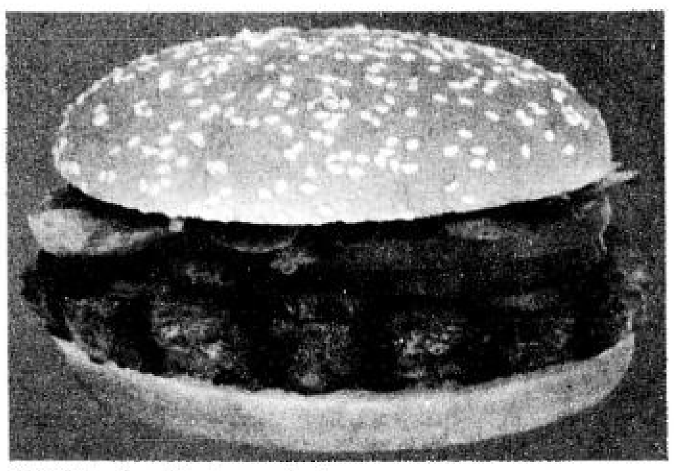
Dining at Ebisu is a refined and relaxed must. If you linger for only two hours, you're liable to suffer from panic: the sense that you must stay alert to enjoy every nibble, every sip. It's antithetical to relaxing. If there's one thing worth bringing to this restaurant and bar, it's a sense of calm.

Ebisu Grill (tels. 890-7992/8014, 896-6475), located at 146-B Jupiter St., Makati, is open Monday to Friday for both lunch and dinner.

E-mail the author at rburgos@inquirer.com.ph

BUSINESS partners and sweethearts: Gretchen Picache and Paolo Abaya

Flaming American success find its way here



PURE beef and half-pounder burger

FLAMERS, the fastest-growing hamburger and chicken food chain in the United States, is now ready to sizzle in the Ortigas Business District, with its new outlet at the G/F Millennium Place, Meralco Avenue, Pasig. Designed by architect Luis Zialcita, the restaurant exudes a cozy atmosphere equipped with cable TV, clean restrooms and a spacious free parking area for customers.

Since its first outlet in Jacksonville, Florida in 1987, Flamers has steadily grown into a huge franchising success, with more than 80 outlets in major US cities and international locations such as Puerto Rico, Egypt and, of course, the Philippines, starting with their first outlet at 3/L Festival Mall, Alabang, managed by Seven Sierra Food Corp.

Flamers combines the service and affordability of fast-food and the food quality of casual dining. Flamers' burgers, made of 100 percent pure beef, are the biggest in the fast-food industry at ½ pound each. Unlike other fast-food hamburger restaurants, Flamers does not precook their charbroiled hamburgers. Flamers burgers are grilled over hot volcanic stones that cook faster and enhance the natural smoked flavor of beef. All burgers are grilled upon order and served hot, with finger-thick French fries or onion rings.

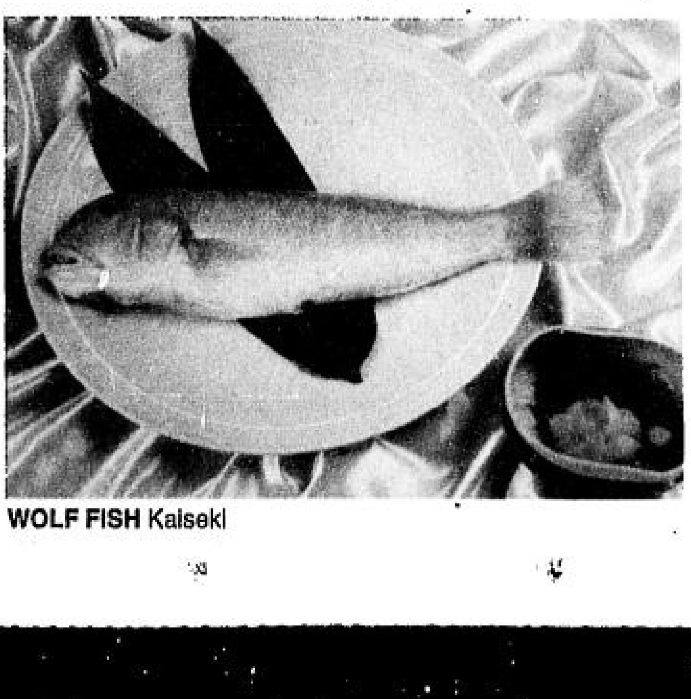
Flamers also has a "Top-It-Yourself-Sandwich-Bar" that allows picky customers to top their sandwiches with vegetables and sidings of their own choice. Health-conscious customers will be pleased to know that Flamers burgers have 30 percent less fat, since oil is not used for cooking. Even more interesting is their chicken breast sandwich. It's virtually fat-free!

Flamers great combo meals are available for a shoestring budget. Add to that a wide selection of sloppy fries, hotdogs, cheese steaks, garden-fresh and Caesar salads as well as kids meals.

Sit-down menu focuses on full-flavored fish

ANOTHER exotic yet satisfyingly delicious fish variety is the main feature at Benkay, the Japanese restaurant at Dusit Hotel Nikko Manila during its "Wolffish Kaiseki" promotion from March 5-31.

Chef Yoshikatsu Yasuda has prepared a sit-down menu of sumptuous wolffish dishes, a recognized bestseller in Japan and also in Manila, which abound with lovers of great tasting Japanese food. The full-flavored, tender and juicy flesh of wolffish (far from the wolf animal we all know) is suited for a melange of dishes. Enjoy it as an appetizer, sashimi, grilled or fried prepared the authentic Japanese way.



WOLF FISH Kaiseki

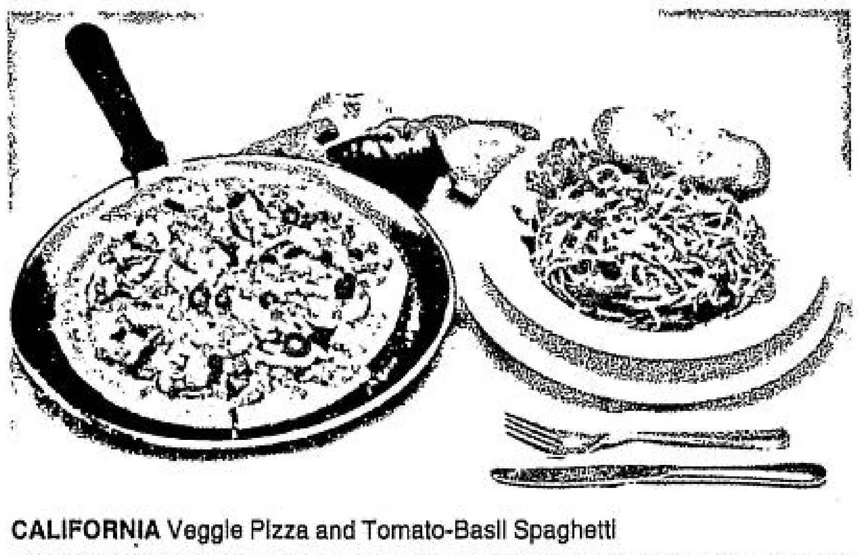
The wolffish kaiseki (sit-down menu) starts with an entrée of marinated wolffish with okra and wasabi sauce. Then a clear soup of the featured fish and vegetables. The main courses include thinly sliced raw wolffish, grilled wolffish Wakasa style, deep-fried wolffish with taranome vegetable and steamed wolffish with cherry blossom. Also included are wolffish porridge and Japanese pickles, followed by cherry blossom ice cream for dessert.

Call 867-3333 extensions 3343-44 or e-mail foodbevmnl@dusit.com.

A repertory of pizza and pasta selections

DINING OUT

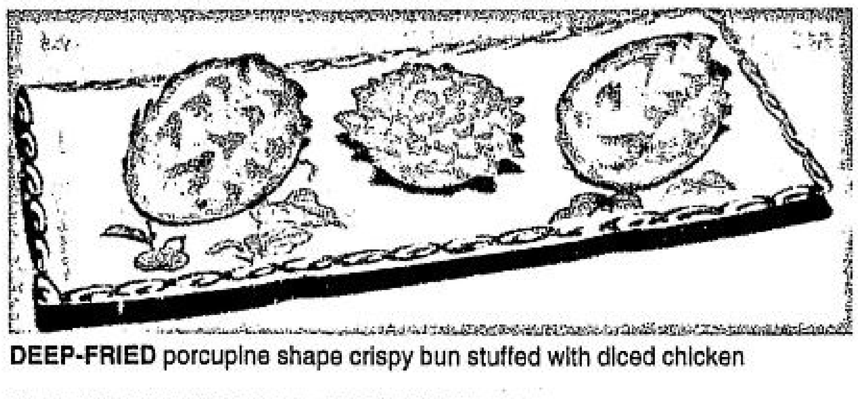
TREAT your family and friends to a repast of vegetable-based meals this Lenten season. Pizza lovers can try two special fares-California Veggie Pizza and Pizza Margherita while pasta aficionados can choose from Tomato-basil Pasta, Spaghetti Al Pesto and Fettuccini Alfredo. Aside from these palatable concoctions, Don Henrico's also has delicious seafood pizza and pasta selections which you can choose from. New additions to the menu are Chili Garlic Shrimp in Olive Oil and Spicy Tuna and Walnut Pasta. They also have alternative vegetable dishes such as Vegetable Calzone, Primavera Pizza Wraps, Eggplant Parmigiana, Mexican Quesadillas and more.



CALIFORNIA Veggie Pizza and Tomato-Basil Spaghetti

MANILA MIDTOWN. A special Chinese buffet awaits you at the Vogue Coffeeshop spread that invites you to partake of delicious delicacies of the Far East. Fit for an emperor, dine in a fine repast masterfully whipped up by The Manila Midtown Hotel's Cantonese chefs.

Choose from a wide array of appetizers, cold cuts, dim sum and dumplings, suckling pig, Peking duck and an inexhaustible collection of Chinese specialties and tempting Eastern desserts. Call 526-7001 local 6554.



DEEP-FRIED porcupine shape crispy bun stuffed with diced chicken

HOLIDAY INN. Holiday Inn Manila with the Department of Tourism Cagayan Valley Region II brings in the culinary treasures of Cagayan Valley with "Pagayaya Food Festival" at the Café Coquilla from March 5-17.

Café Coquilla features a gastronomic adventure up north to the province of Cagayan Valley. Guest chefs from the famous "Cagayan Pampangueña Restaurant," namely Gloria Pulusan and Luis Hipolito, will share their adaptations and interpretations of the province's authentic recipes like *pinapaitan*, *igado*, *sinigang ti purung*, *kaldereta na kazzing*, *crocetas de patatas*, *pesa nad dalag*, *mondonggo*, chicken fricasi, *pangat na tilapia*, *chuletas*, *pastel de carne* and more. Call 526-1212 local 2318.

STEAMED Rabbit Shape Dumpling with Minced Shrimp

PEARL MANILA. The Pearl Manila now serves Hot Pot. Only the freshest meats, vegetables, noodles, seasonings and spices are offered for Hot Pot. Select from a myriad of combinations, simmer them in a delectable and sumptuous broth and experience a truly delightful Asian specialty cuisine. Hot Pot is available for lunch at Seven Seas Cafe, 9/F The Pearl Manila, Gen. Luna Street corner Taft and UN Avenues. Call 410-5306.

CHOPSTIX. For dim sum lovers, Chopstix Wilson Restaurant launches its Dim Sum Buffet Promo. Dim Sum favorites include pork dumpling, chicken feet, chicken with black mushroom, spare ribs and beef balls. Promo is ongoing until April 30. Chopstix is at 220 Wilson St., San Juan, Metro Manila.

MANDARIN ORIENTAL. Delight in the rich exotic flavors of authentic Hong Kong dim sums as Mandarin Oriental Manila presents the expertise of guest chef Leun Kin On of Hong Kong in a culinary festival dubbed "Hong Kong Dim Sum Adventure" until March 4 at Tin Hau. A variety of sweet and savoury dim sums masterfully crafted by Chef Leun awaits Chinese cuisine gourmands and their families. Call 750-8888 local 2422 and 2424.

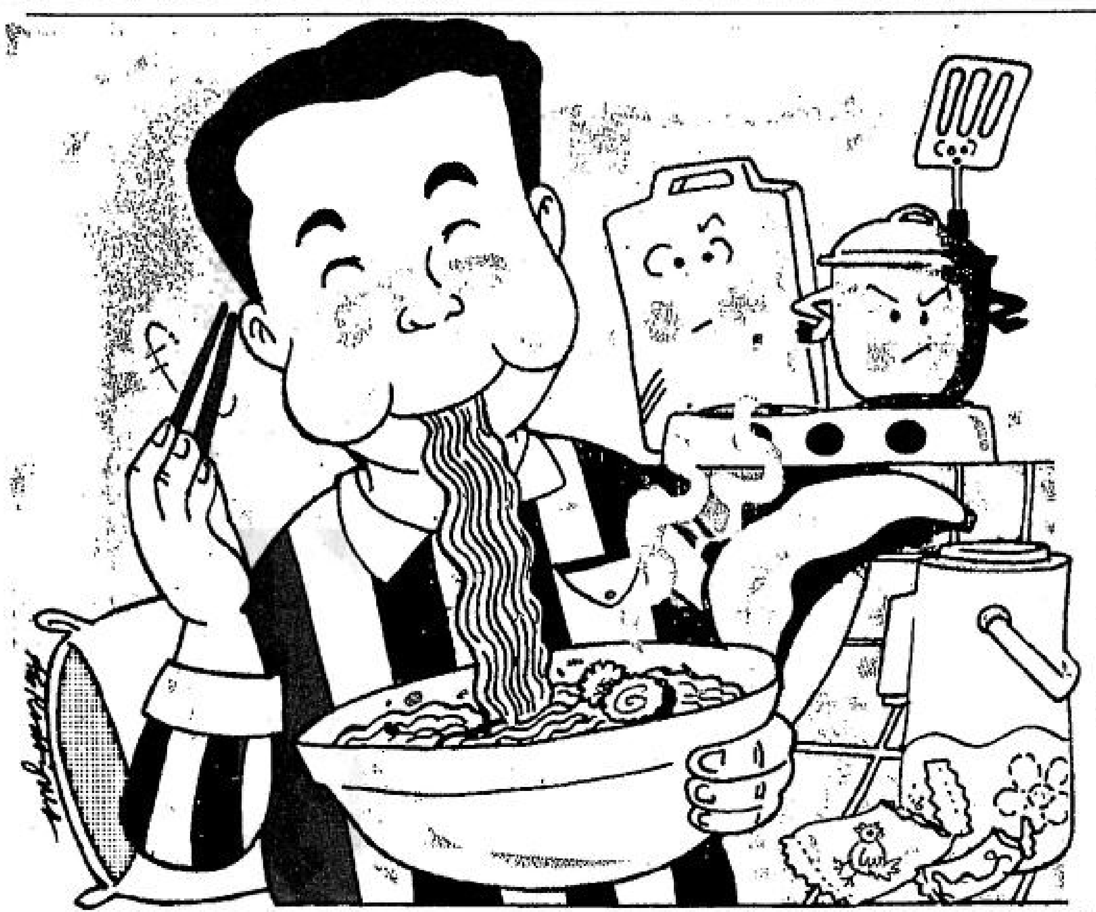


ILLUSTRATION: ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

Oriental staple

THE MAD TEA PARTY

Clinton Palanca

A POPULAR misconception about me is that I spend my life lurching from feast to banquet to bacchanalian orgy, stopping for an ice-cream or nibbling on chocolates on the way in case I get a little peckish. Nothing could be further from the truth. I actually eat very rarely, if at all; and almost never well. I derive most of my nutrition from biting my nails nervously in times of stress, which is all the time.

I usually rise by mid-afternoon, have a cup of tea (minimal nutrition, I suppose, derived from the milk and sugar), and then do errands until it's time for dinner. I usually meet friends for dinner, and since it's my main meal of the day, it's very important that we actually sit down and have a meal, as opposed to the highly nebulous concept of "meeting up for drinks." This is one reason I don't date models: they never actually eat. The other reason is that they won't go out with me.

At dinner I try to fill up with all the major food groups: protein, carbohydrates, vegetables, and butter. Despite all my barbs about vegetarians, I usually try to avoid eating meat if I can help it, except for those times I really have to, such as when I'm having a steak. Meat protein also takes longer to digest (and requires more water, which is why you feel thirsty after a meat meal; nothing to do with the salt), so this keeps me happy until about 3 a.m., when my stomach begins to clamor for a second meal. And now the problems begin.

'Tamad' food

There are two choices: I can go out and take my pick of the eating-places open at this hour, of which there aren't many; or, I can try and whip something up at home. Cooking is often the last thing you want to do at this hour: you're tired, hungry, sleepy and, in my case, might have been doing it all evening at the restaurant. So I have my roster of what I call *tamad* foods: more on these some other time, but let's focus on one for the moment, instant noodles.

> The popularity of instant noodles is rising; those steaming bowls of reconstituted starch, laced with monosodium glutamate and riboflavin are what power this column

A history lesson, then. Instant ramen was invented in 1948 following food shortages from the war by a man named Momofuku Ando, who went on to found Nissin's. Ten years later, the dried noodles (first introduced with just one flavor, chicken), were flying off the shelves. They have since become a staple of Japanese households, and slowly conquered Asia. In America they have been taken to heart by the present generation with its cosmopolitan tastes and addiction to convenience. At the moment, in Europe the market is still largely the Asiatic communities there, despite aggressive marketing pushes.

Fan that I am of instant noodles, I never had to resort to them while living in Paris, mainly because food was plentiful, cheap and readily available. It's here, actually, that I find myself eating them at least three nights a week, or even more often, depending on my level of creativity. One of my problems is that while making instant noodles, my chef instincts kick in, and I suddenly find myself with the urge to embellish. I guess it would be like Marie Antoinette living in a zen minimalist apartment; you can hear her murmuring: "Yes, very nice…but what if we put a little gold-leaf scroll here? And perhaps a row of gilded mirrors? And some crystal chandeliers? Yes, much better."

So, depending on my mood and the content of my refrigerator, I might thoughtfully sprinkle on some chili powder, supplement the sesame oil, add a few drops of *layu* (the Japanese hot oil), strew on some *furikake*, beat in an egg, squeeze in a calamansi; and then there are some experiments too horrible to describe. Marmite was never meant to intersect with Japanese convenience foods. A friend of mine who works at an advertising research company once told me that housewives being interviewed for focus-group discussions invented the calamansi addition "to remove the chemicals," and that some brands of instant noodles are packaged with a certain degree of difficulty in preparation (the number of separate packs you have to tear open) to give housewives the illusion that they are actually "cooking," so that they don't feel too guilty about the lack of labor expended in feeding their families.

More to noodles

But there's more to this than meets the noodle. One of the more intriguing areas of food research is subsistence: essentially, it's the research being done on how to feed people balanced diets at a low cost; its logical extreme is the problem of how to alleviate starvation. It has been pointed out often that rice is not the most efficient way of feeding a poor country; there is some equation that takes into account the amount of land, fertilizer, and labor, and so on, in proportion to the nutrients that one actually derives from rice. One of the alternatives proposed, I believe, was a starch somewhat akin to that which is used for *sago*, although I don't think pearl shakes is what will feed the starving masses.

The problem, of course, with such solutions is that, like many practical things, they are usually not edible. Who wants to live on *sago* mush? Cassava root (also known as manioc, or tapioca in its refined form) will keep underground for three years, but you will have to keep me underground for three years before I'll eat that stuff. But instant noodles have suddenly surfaced as a strangely improbable possibility. It can be stored for a year before it goes rancid (the noodles are fried before dehydration, and so contain a certain amount of oil, usually palm), or crumbles into dust; this is certainly a shorter shelf life than manioc, but is long enough, and does not involve anything subterranean. You don't even have to cook it; some people bite into the cake of matted noodles raw, like a very thick biscuit.

People like the stuff. And it's cheap: Maggi's Me and My Mug, which sounds horribly cutesy but is actually rather convenient, sells for P4. This includes the plastic wrapping, the retailer's mark-up, and the distribution costs. Lucky Me Supreme goes for around P10, in a styrofoam cup. Yaki Soba, instant noodles which simulate stir-fried noodles, goes for P16, most of it, I expect, for the plastic packaging. On the higher end side of the scale, I have a particular fondness for the Wei-Wei brand, which is more flavorful than most. And for a complete meal, there are Lee Kum Kee noodles which come with a foil pack of actual meat in sauce, all for P66.

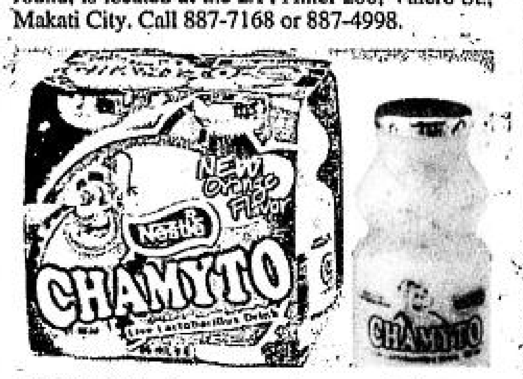
There will be a crest to the curve, of course, but the popularity of instant noodles as staple food is still climbing, and some nutritionists predict that it is the staple food of the future. At the same time that I shudder at the thought, I do thank the heavens that it isn't cassava or taro that on which we will raise the future generations of our countrymen. The leaders of tomorrow, the heroes of the new republic, will have grown strong and wise on Lucky Me.

And while I do sing the praises of instant noodles and their convenience, I damn the attitudes toward food and the circumstances of food supply that have made it necessary to make these dehydrated yellow curls such an integral part of my life, and of so many others'. Yes, those steaming bowls of reconstituted starch, laced with monosodium glutamate (and "riboflavin," whatever that is), are what power this column—and with what newspapers pay these days, probably those of most of my colleagues as well.

E-mail the author at clinton@i-manila.com.ph

Freebies and special promos

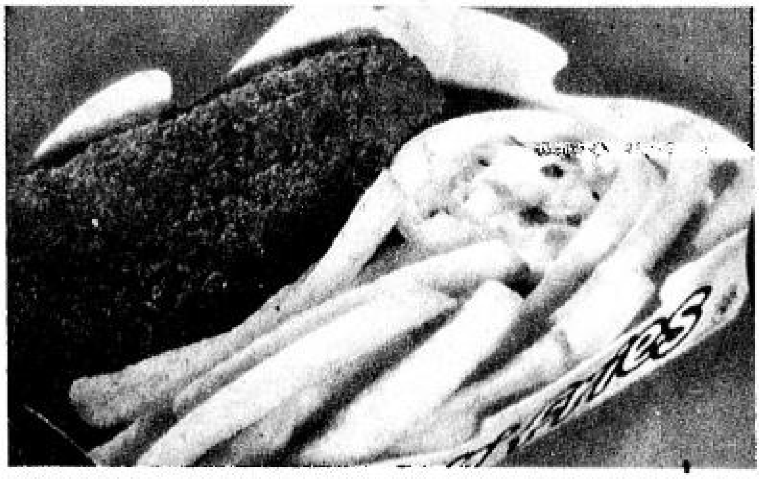
WIN two round-trip tickets to romantic Rome, with Il Ponticello's "Great Escape to a Roman Holiday" raffle which runs until March 15. Also up for grabs is a champagne-colored South Sea pearl from Jewelmer, as well as hundreds of thousands of pesos worth of timeless Murano glass sculptures from I Dogi di Venezia. For every food purchase of P1,500, diners are entitled to one raffle ticket. Il Ponticello, which offers easy escape cuisine year-round, is located at the 2/F. Antel 200, Valero St., Makati City. Call 887-7168 or 887-4998.



NESTLÉ introduces new Chamyto Orange, a totally radical concept that mixes the health rewards of a live lactobacillus drink with the sweet, fruity flavor of orange. A big swig of delicious Chamyto Orange every day keeps the doctor away.

SNACK lovers can now munch on new delicious chips from FritoLay—Doritos Sonic Sour Cream, Doritos Spicier Nacho, Doritos Taco and Lay's Cracker Barrel Potato Chips, Doritos Tortilla Chips, Lay's Cracker Barrel Potato Chips and other FritoLay products are exclusively distributed by Benby Enterprises. These snacks are now available at all leading supermarkets and groceries nationwide.

KRAFT Foods Phils. Inc. introduces new improved Kraft Real Mayonnaise, the best-tasting extra creamy mayonnaise now available at all leading supermarkets nationwide.



FAST-FOOD leader Jollibee is introducing Fish n' Fries, its new product offering for the Lenten Season. Fish n' Fries is 100-percent fish fillet, breaded and deep-fried to a crispy golden brown that comes with regular fries. Now available at Jollibee stores nationwide at P55 (solo) and P59 (value meal).

KFC'S CHUCKIE MEAL PROMO

The chasing continues as KFC brings the Tom & Jerry wacky pair to Chuckie Meal. For every purchase of a KFC Chuckie Meal, you'll get a Tom & Jerry toy. Collect Lunch Box Surprise, Kettle Chase and Tom Chasing Tail and Pop Up Jerry in any of the three Chuckie Meals—BBQ Burger Meal, Spaghetti Meal and Chicken Meal.

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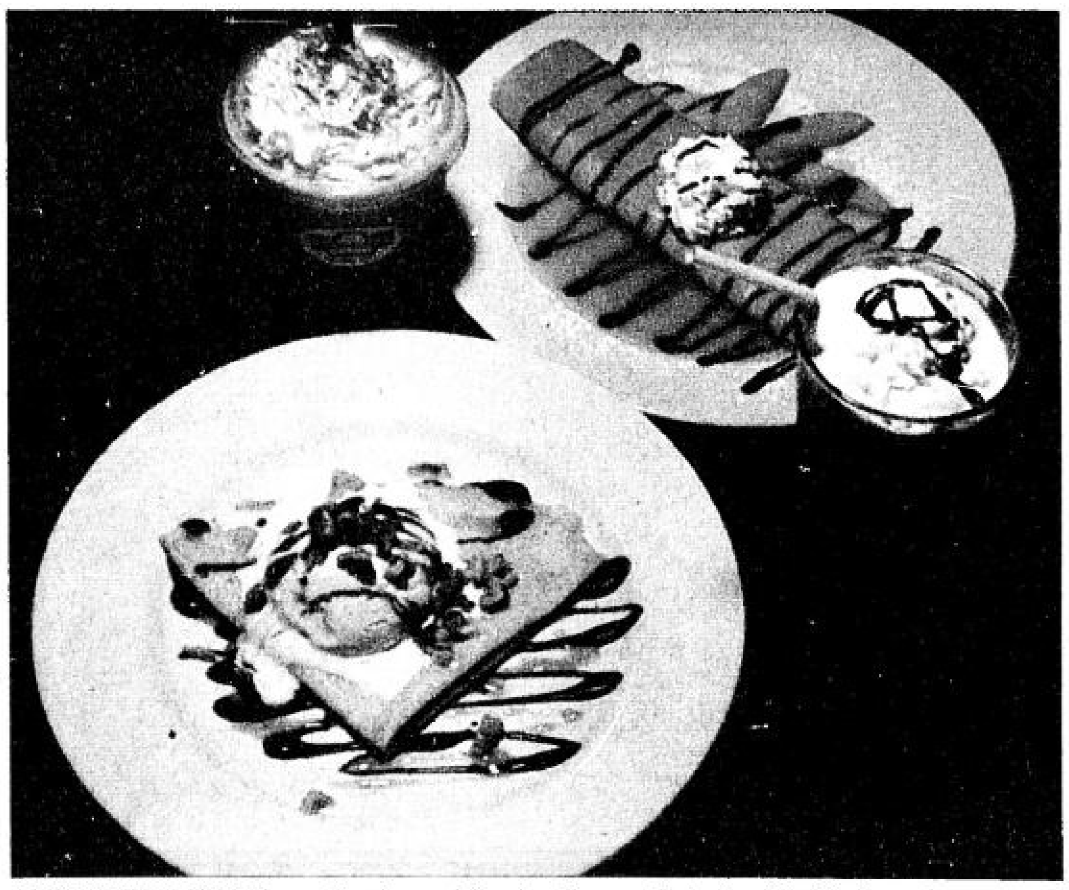
STIMULATING and generous servings of sandwich treats: Lamberto's D'etre, Triple Decker and Chicken Waldorf


MOUTH-WATERING Mango Pandan and Sundae Crepe, with best-selling Northern Frappe and Iced Mocha

There's something brewing up North

TOURISTS are drawn to the booming, vibrant nightlife of Angeles City, which is only 83 km north of Manila. Its central location also makes the city a perfect stopover point for further travels, especially because it boasts of a variety of quality restaurants.

Among these is Northern Brew, a pioneering effort that has ushered in the café culture.

Sophisticated quaintness

The facade and the coffeetables give you a taste of what's inside. Guests are immediately drawn by the distinctive aroma of simmering fresh coffee. Noted Picasso paintings and works of contemporary Kapampangan artist grace the walls.

As a *barista* takes your order, you hear the familiar tunes of Italian tenors, Spanish balladeers and Irish/British jazz artists. One piece would probably be unfamiliar to you—a one-of-a-kind treat unique to Northern Brew—opera pieces rendered in the local dialect by renowned Kapampangan artists. Books that line up their shelves are for serious reading. These include law journals and bestsellers by Scott Turow, Pat Conway, John Grisham, Tom Clancy, Michael Crichton and Sue Miller.

Italian opera and books are probably the last thing you'd expect in a coffee shop outside Metro Manila, but that's exactly what Northern Brew has managed to do—fuse sophistication and simplicity. The relaxing ambience is conducive to meaningful conversations and intimate reflections.

THE COFFEE shop's simple and yet elegant façade

Generous servings

Besides a wide range of coffee concoctions, standard in all cafés, Northern Brew prides itself with its house specials, which include crepes (mouth-watering Mango Pandan Crepe, is a bestseller), homemade Banana Pecan or Apple Walnut Waffle and authentic Italian-style pastas.

But the star of the menu is the Northern Frappe, which clients have compared to Frapuccino. Another attraction is their Ice Mocha, an ice-cold concoction beneath a spray of whipped cream topped with choco syrup.

The deli sandwiches are hard to refuse. Neptune's Delight is a crab sandwich smothered with other bounties from the sea. Lamberto's d'etre, on the other hand, is a 10-inch submarine of a French bread served with generous slices of cold cuts. Another blockbuster is their Blueberry Cheesecake, which diners swore is superb.

Northern Brew's management team is fully committed to smart, quality customer service. "We believe in the value of teamwork and in the system of work where there should be no delineation between management and staff," says Obet Zulueta, the café's co-owner.

Aries Patawaran, who teaches at UP, handles the marketing and human resources aspect while his wife Christy, a former banker, is the café chef. Also a former banker, Obet's wife Dina, handles the finances while he tailor-fits the most suitable system for the café's day-to-day operations.

Now you know. When people say there's something brewing up north, Northern Brew started it.

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